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IN A COLLEGE GARDEN

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THE AUTHOR.

[*Frontispiece.*

IN A COLLEGE GARDEN

BY VISCOUNTESS WOLSELEY
CITIZEN AND GARDENER OF LONDON
AUTHOR OF
"GARDENING FOR WOMEN," "WHAT TO BE: A GARDENER"

"Whoever can make two ears of corn or two blades of grass grow where only one grew before will deserve better of mankind and do more essential service to his country than the whole race of politicians put together."—SWIFT.

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
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I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

TO MY TWO DEAR FRIENDS

M. G. C. AND E. R. M.

WHOSE SYMPATHY AND WORK

IN SUNSHINE AND APRIL SHOWER HAVE

HELPED ME TO BUILD UP THIS

SCHOOL OF GARDENING

"For hope and love and enthusiasm never die."

Red Pottage.

NOTE

I desire to record my obligation to Messrs. Chatto & Windus for allowing me to quote the verse on p. 85, taken from "Ancient English Christmas Carols."

PREFACE

Amongst many changes that the Great War has brought about, none are more marked than those which concern the future of Englishwomen. It is difficult at present to take a sufficiently comprehensive view of these altered conditions, but a few certainties that will affect women, stand out prominently and are worth consideration.

The private soldier, when he returns home, will expect greater thrift and better cooking than he has hitherto exacted from his wife. During his sojourn in France he has learnt to appreciate the Frenchwoman's careful housekeeping. He knows how cleverly, with a few broken sticks, she can kindle a fire which enables her to cook a dinner for him that a king would not despise. It is not that she uses more or better ingredients than the Englishwoman, but centuries of careful saving and thoughtful consideration in making the most out of very little have taught her how to be a good manager. War has been brought often near to the homes of French people; they, like the Belgians, have realised the devastation that comes with it, and consequently women, in both these countries, have learnt a degree of resourcefulness and industry which is lacking in our village people.

The country labourer in England is accustomed to light his own kitchen fire and take a cup of tea to his wife before he goes off to work, for she considers it unnecessary to be up so early.

We cannot refrain from asking ourselves whether he will not be more critical of these small things when he returns to his village home after the war.

Many ladies, brought up to think that their incomes would suffice for all their wants, will find that heavy taxation and high prices necessitate their having a profession. Consequently, many will have to go through serious training in the same way that a man makes a study of his work, because he knows that without this he cannot contend with other competitors. Parents will have to consider this in educating their daughters, for until recently money was put by for a son's education, but daughters were inadequately equipped to do full justice to their talents and capabilities. Their training was but slight and insufficiently paid for, which has made it difficult to gauge to the full whether women are competent in their work to the extent that men are.

But perhaps the greatest responsibilities that have come to women will be borne by those to whom the war has brought most sorrow, for those young widows who are left to undertake alone the education of boys and girls must feel that the future of this country depends largely upon how they acquit themselves in it.

It has been in the hope of bringing the vast possibilities that lie hidden in country life to the mind of some of these workers, to those who have

to make a beginning and find it exceedingly hard to do so, that I have written these pages. The part which concerns what has been done to build up the Market Garden School at Glynde also describes the work done there during the first twelve months of the war. It was written, amidst other work, for the amusement of those friends who have been good enough always to follow with interest what my women gardeners have done during the course of fourteen years, and will, I hope, convey somewhat of the happy, joyous atmosphere that surrounds years of training for the garden profession.

Interwoven with this are ideas that may, I hope, interest those who do not wish to be professional gardeners but are desirous of knowing more about land questions. Suggestions are given for the better housing and living of the village labourer, for stemming the Rural Exodus (not the present war shortage, but the one that has for centuries depleted the countryside), and for increasing the yield from our land by the settlement of colonies of growers throughout England.

All these are subjects which should concern those boys and girls who are now growing up and will themselves own land, so that it is important that their mothers should consider these questions. If ladies will interest themselves in the land and study it seriously they will have it in their power to revive those rural industries which have alternately been tossed about by party politics and allowed to dwindle into insignificance beside more absorbing matters connected with town life.

But in restoring the sister industries of Agriculture and Horticulture to the honoured positions which they once held and should always maintain if a country is to remain strong, it is advisable to take, as a model of women's share in such work, what has been so splendidly carried out in Canada. It may be suggested that social conditions in the mother country render it out of the question to build up anything approaching the Canadian Women's Institutes. Certainly, until recently, such an attempt would have been fraught with difficulty, but the war has altered much and is daily bringing English life, that had unconsciously become over-luxurious, unnecessarily complicated, impeded by foolish, trivial conventionalities, back to the simple, natural life that a young country like Canada is accustomed to. It is easier, there, to hold in mind that true sense of proportion which in an old country is apt to be lost sight of.

If each year more thoroughly trained, educated men and women settle in groups, as they have done at Pershore and in other districts, and have orchards and market gardens; if landowners take a pride in making their land pay, instead of considering their supervision of work a mere pastime, the life that we formerly led will be changed, and conditions wider in outlook and healthier in every way, like those that exist in Canada, will be sought for in the mother country.

One noticeable point about women's work in Canada is the strong financial and other helpful support that is given to it by the Government of each Province. It is also encouraging to see

how united men and women workers are, how they act together as comrades, and to note the steadfast, calm, non-hysterical way in which their women push forward all national movements.

Those who, like myself, have been brought in close contact with women workers of every social grade, of varying temperament and character, know full well the large capacity for good that is in most Englishwomen. Patriotism, powers of organisation, self-sacrifice for any cause that they take to heart, an unbounded enthusiasm which renders them regardless of physical weakness or fatigue, these are qualities that they most certainly possess in a high degree. Whether they are rich or poor, high up in social position or very humble, it is seldom that a real worker has not several of these characteristics, and this being the case, it would seem impossible that they could fail in those great things that are now expected of them. And yet those who have the interests of women very close to their hearts are waiting with tense anxiety to see how they will take this great chance that has come to them, how they will suffice to meet the strain which future years will put upon them. Will they take it with both their hands, earnestly, with no thought of self, having learnt those traditions of discipline, order, and *esprit de corps* that generations of Public School life have taught to men ?

If goodwill or endurance alone sufficed, they would take their chance just as willingly as any man, but lack of disciplined training still handicaps those young women who leave their homes at

seventeen and are sent out into the world to learn a profession. Until this is remedied in all educational preparation, whether it be in their homes or later, out in the world, it will only be the exceptional Englishwoman who will prosper.

It is not from Canadian women alone, however, that we can learn, for their men can teach us even more. They have fully grasped the fact that the best work is always done when men and women share discussions and decisions, and Englishmen are only slowly awaking to this and to a knowledge of the fact that many women are obliged to earn a living, and if they are to do so creditably to themselves must be sufficiently trained. Owing to this tardiness in realising what is required of educational centres, whether they are for domestic science as applied to village women or educated people, whether for medicine, secretarial work, gardening, or farming, our Government is slow in helping either financially or with advice. Too much has been done by and is being left to voluntary workers who may or may not be experienced enough to undertake such work. From Canada we learn with what admirable skill in leadership their Governments aid and encourage initiative in both paid and unpaid officials, how they give liberal support both financially and by imparting freely information of an invaluable kind because it comes from a far-seeing source. More of this, and fewer red-tape restrictions, would help materially towards the establishment of really useful women citizens, and when Englishmen have learnt, as they cannot fail to do after this war, how much

they can help women by encouraging their educational development, by rewarding and recognising those women who show initiative and do solid work, I feel sure that the young women of England will not fail in acting up to the highest ideals, for they know that the future of our great Empire depends not upon the middle-aged or old, but the young generation of women and how earnestly and steadfastly they set about their task.

WOLSELEY.

COLLEGE OF GARDENING,
GLYNDE, SUSSEX.
October 7, 1915.

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IN A COLLEGE GARDEN

CHAPTER I

THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE GARDENING YEAR

It has been my good fortune to be able to build up slowly on a cornfield, devoid of house, tree, or shrub, a garden complete enough to afford ample preparation to those women who wish to make a livelihood by gardening.

Like all work that one has enjoyed doing, it has at times been arduous and fraught with care and anxiety, but the assurance that what was fifteen years ago mere pioneer work has now proved itself a really prosperous profession for women is sufficient reward for past troubles. During a considerable number of years I was obliged to do single-handed and alone the supervising and much of the clerical work, and, now that I find myself entirely relieved of this strenuous and yet intensely interesting task, it occurs to me that some glimpses of the daily life and work at a horticultural college, some reflections upon possible future national developments, may be of interest to those who wish to further this ever-widening profession for women. There is something so joyous and happy about the open-air life

of a gardener which the general public hardly realise, unless they are brought into touch with students who live surrounded by this atmosphere, that it may be pardonable, I hope, to make it more widely known.

It is, indeed, a surprise to awake one morning in October and feel that just at the commencement of the horticultural year, when all preparation of the land and planning for fresh crops has to be undertaken, the work is transferred to other hands and that in future I can be a mere onlooker.

No longer is the first thought of the day a consideration of the weather and the consequent garden operations that need to be done ; never again will autumn evenings find me intent upon adding up totals in the receipt columns made by sales of produce, to see what can be spent for the general good. The winter's fire will not, as it crackles, give impulse to my plans for handling students. All this has now passed into other, more capable hands than mine, and, strange to say, much as I enjoyed it, much as it was part of me, I do not regret it.

It would seem, at first sight, that this sudden cessation of one's accustomed everyday life, the consequent change of daily thought and fixed routine, might detract from the prospective enjoyment of freedom. It is only necessary, however, to look out over those strong, enduring lines of the South Downs, as seen from the garden, to feel that when the heart is centred in advancing a cause there can be no turning away from it, and although work, in time to come, will not bring

me into hourly intercourse with students, I shall, in reality, be able to help on their profession more than I have hitherto been able to assist it.

No longer impeded by the numerous and very minute details which are always connected with the supervision of any community, I shall have time to read and write about " Gardencraft " in all the many branches of the profession which concern women. It will be easier for me to carry conviction if I speak as an observer, as one who, after many years of experience, has handed over the commercial side and the profits to another, and is now solely occupied in endeavouring to strengthen and broaden all women's work upon the land, as it concerns, not private, but wide, national interests.

So I muse, as I sit in the early morning, the autumn sun shining bright and warm upon my small encampment of gay Eastern carpet and wicker garden chair, within the shelter of the Sunk Garden.

The tints of all the foliage that surround it are gold and silver, whether it be that great bush of unrestrained honeysuckle that ramps upwards towards the encircling beech hedge or the tufts of traveller's joy that weigh down the pergola made of pale blue, wooden children's hoops, which, interlaced, form picture frames of leaves. Even the soft grey hills look silvery as they are seen through these arches above the tall row of pale mauve asters that outlines the garden. The other note of colour is a strong red one, for the little wild strawberry leaves that fill the interstices between

the paving-stones, although very golden, have touches of red, too, and sometimes this is accentuated in a fat strawberry that has somehow come so late this year that it has escaped being picked. Little miniature-pottery oil-jars act as sentries at the corners of the five formal rose-beds. Dark red fuchsias are in them, with here and there a pink ivy geranium, and these two flowers harmonise wonderfully in colour with the old China roses and pale pink Bourbon ones that are in the beds. There is, as everywhere in our garden, a prevalence of pale blue, for the tall wooden symbol standard that stands erect in the centre, waiting for a baby rambler rose to grow long limbs and clamber up it, is painted this colour, and so are the tub armchairs and the wooden table that invite to restful writings.

The only things that perhaps remind me now of many difficulties that had to be faced some five years ago, when this portion of the garden was begun, are the high banks of chalk. They are partly covered with strong creepers, and even golden-headed fennell has been courageous enough to sow itself there and become established ; but all the same the eye that knows can detect the glare of white chalk, and seeing it I recall to mind the sound of the pick as it fell at regular intervals, hewing down the hard rock to form this sheltered, hidden garden.

Those were days when the shadeless chalk slope had to be worked by strong lime-pit workers, when the windows of the house looked down upon bare earth, for there had not been time for any

planting; all was then in the making, and the pleasure was prospective.

Now, after all those days of struggle and contention, when garden pests were plentiful, and boisterous south-west gales swept, free of barrier, direct from the Channel ten miles off, there seems a time of peace and prosperity. Just as the tender flowering shrubs, the buddleia with its golden balls, and the other variety with long, slender, mauve blossoms, the sweet-scented verbena, and the beautifully-pencilled passion flowers, have taken firm hold upon " Ragged Lands "—for such is the long-established name which describes well what this place was once like—so a tall, graceful, and energetic leader of young women has taken root upon the somewhat unpropitious soil.

It would often seem that the mere fact of having to endure disappointments and overcome difficulties is an incentive to those men or women who in this life are destined to succeed. Certain it is that she who some few years ago was a student here, and has to-day by sheer energy, hard work, and a certain degree of good luck, achieved the proud position of being principal at this Garden College will turn out capable, good gardeners if any one can. I know that at this moment, when I am idly reflecting, whilst the garden and I are alone together, and only the occasional flutter of regiments of field-fares circling overhead interrupts for a moment my train of thought, some twenty or more young women are standing, note-books in hand, to receive their orders for the day. It is not only lessons in plant-life that they will have,

for they will be taught obedience, orderliness, and much worldly wisdom. They will go away, after their two years here, stronger, more capable, happier women, and out in the world they will be able in all honesty to say that much of this they owe to the teaching they have had, both in play and work time, upon the chalk slope beneath one of the beacons of our English Downs. Here they have not only been told to treat plants tenderly, like human beings, but they have also learnt to do their duty by one another and, as an Englishman would perhaps express it, "to play the game." Such lessons are readily acquired when they come from a woman who, though she has risen to leadership, has herself been a student and gone through the same vicissitudes.

Again a swish of many wings overhead, wheeling from side to side, in regimental order similar to the cavalry charges that our newspapers have recently been full of; and then the stillness is faintly broken by the sound of distant, quiet young voices. It is a sign that the conclave in the students' office has ended, and each one has been sent about her work.

When I walk towards the house between the tall ghosts of hollyhocks and achillea that remain to call back summer glories, I catch occasional glimpses of the new-comers who have lately joined our garden life. One or two are rosy-cheeked and as bonny-looking as the great, round, red apples that hang upon our many young trees; others are slender, pale, perhaps inert. At present the new students are easily distinguished, for they have

not yet got their regulation garden-work clothes, nor do they look as alert as the ones who have been here some months. They resemble, in some respects, the men of Kitchener's New Army, whom we have all lately been watching—untidy and somewhat ungainly, but each week acquiring more of the upright, active, military swing.

As I watch the young women gathering apples on this still autumn day, coming up the hill bearing on their arms wooden Sussex "trugs," all lined with soft wood wool to prevent their load of fruit being bruised, I am more than ever convinced that gardening is most essentially suitable work for them. There is so much connected with it that requires the dainty touch of a woman, much that her inborn gentleness can help.

Two long, low, dark and cool apple-rooms have been excavated out of the chalk, and here on wooden shelves the apples are carefully laid, forming thus the richest treasure-houses of the garden. Plenty of ventilation is provided, for we have a good succession of keeping kinds, and are able thus to reserve a supply for private customers right through the winter months.

A head student has charge of this Department, and whenever a fresh variety is gathered, she weighs the number of pounds with her set of scales, and enters it in a book. This record forms a valuable guide at the end of the season as to the amount of fruit the garden yields, and tells us, too, which kinds do best on this land. We have received recently the great encouragement of having some of the fruit grown here shown at the dinner

which is now a yearly institution at the Mansion House, when a large and charmingly arranged cornucopia of produce is presented by the Worshipful Company of Fruiterers to the Lord Mayor. Amongst the apples that were sent by us as a gift to the Fruiterers' Company was one that weighed a pound and a half.

But I must return to the older students, the ones who have been here some time, for they are at work at an even more important job. They are planting out the rooted layers of carnations. We like to have a great many of these lovely flowers, because, for one thing, we have chosen it as the flower emblem of the College. The visitor finds it before him on a painted sign-board as he enters the gate, and continually throughout his visit he will see either the real flower or a semblance of it depicted in plaster-work or painted in oils.

The students, that is to say the old-established ones, have their autumn uniform on for the first time, but the new-comers are still, like the army recruits that have lately joined, " in mufti." Our uniform is a very simple one, but answers its purpose well by being practical and neat. It consists of coat and skirt, khaki in colour, because the earth here, having so much lime in it, is light-coloured, and therefore does not show upon a drab-coloured cloth. Over this when busy they wear a Hessian canvas apron containing roomy pockets for knife, raffia, tarred twine, and many other requisites that a gardener has constant need of. The skirts are what are called " Aviation " ones, and are cut so that in windy weather, although they are short,

they always cling neatly to the figure. Brown boots and leggings are below, and students are thus able to walk in and out of rows of cabbages or other vegetables and plants on a rainy day without having that heavy, wet, and tiring drag which is the drawback of an ordinary skirt. Consequently they seldom have bad colds, and thoroughly enjoy the freedom thus given if they are called upon to climb up ladders or run quickly uphill carrying tools. A white shirt and brown felt soft-rimmed hat complete the uniform, so that the only touches of colour come from a twisted cord round the hat and a silk sailor tie, and both these are red, white, and blue, which are the colours of the College. As I watch them bending over the carnations, and again, in another part of the garden, planting out straight lines of lettuces, I feel that at last something has been achieved in the way of dress which is neat yet essentially becoming and feminine. How often has one regretted that women gardeners were not as tidy and spick-and-span in appearance as the men of the profession!

These lettuces that are being put out are some of the many extras that have been considered necessary because of the war. We always intercrop our ground closely, but in August, only a few days after the declaration of war, it was decided that the more green-stuff we could plant out the better. Although, let us hope, there may arise no need, yet it gives cause for reflection that a result of all the fighting that has taken place round Paris will be the destruction of many French

market-gardens, from which so much of our vegetable food usually comes. Up to the present there has been a glut of unsold produce left upon the English market, a result of war economies practised by the rich; yet one feels that in any eventuality it is safer to have too much than too little in the garden. It may be wanted, and badly wanted, later on.

This year, therefore, we shall hardly have an inch of room to spare in the market-garden here, and all vacant ground, or what we call "dummy" land, that has hitherto been utilised for standing pea-boughs on or used for refuse-heaps, will be dug and cultivated.

We know that our private customers will be glad to send their friends to us for the nicely mixed vegetable "basses" that are dispatched each week to them, so that radishes, carrots, and many other things are being raised in plenty. "Greens," too, of every description abound on the land, and little baby ones are waiting still in their nursery-beds for the first wet day to come, when they will be planted out, and, with ample space round them, should grow to be bushy, fine plants.

I think, perhaps, the man who best understands close intercropping is the self-taught Mr. Vincent, who cultivates land not far from here, at Ditchling, and professes to make £62 a year out of half an acre. Unfortunately, there are not many as thrifty and hard-working, except the French peasants, who wisely make it their life-work to learn not only what to grow and how to raise produce, but also how to market it successfully. I have

been reminded of them this autumn when I have taken my favourite walks to see what blackberries I could find. I think in this part of the world the thrushes and I seem to know the bramble-bushes better even than the children, but probably this is because Saturday is the only free day from school and they prefer to search blackberry preserves that are nearer home than my distant haunts ; perhaps, too, their mothers do not trouble to make jam and so do not encourage the children to pick them.

The place I go to is what the Irish would call a " boreen," a wide grass track with great ups-and-downs of surface and old rut-marks in it. High hedges upon either side unite an irregular avenue of oaks and other trees, so that it forms a sheltered walk in autumn. Here are bright red hips and haws, black-berried privet, and heaps of long bramble trailers with blackberries in that full, bright, glistening condition that makes the mouth water, even when one is past one's teens. A gate is at the end, and leaning over this, looking away from hills and downs, one can see a stretch of marshland that forms the commencement of the great Weald. Here, with soft green grazing land all round it, great wide brooks, and an ancient moat, stands up solitary and rather forbidding the ancient tower belonging to the Pelhams. This was, no doubt, where the " boreen " led, and many must have been the picturesque cavalcades and processions that rode along it across the wind-swept marshes to seek hospitality in this stronghold. Sussex roads are proverbial for sticky mud

and ruts, hence the necessity in olden days of having teams of oxen to draw the chariots of the great people, which no doubt plodded but slowly towards Laughton Tower, leaving only traces of hoofs and wheels for those who come after.

But enough of past days. Like the French peasant, we should make a study of thrift, learning to prepare for all emergencies; and thus even the wild fruit of the hedgerows, the blackberry, could be turned to useful account. Especially is this the case in a year when apples are so plentiful that they are barely accepted gratefully as a gift and cannot all find room on the shelves in the fruit house. There is nothing more delicious than blackberry-and-apple jam, and the advantage of this mixture is that the blackberries help to keep the jam, as apples if boiled alone and bottled would not last without the berries. For the assistance of the good housewife, I give the following recipe, which I have myself found useful:

"To every pound of blackberries put 1 lb. of apples peeled and cored and 1 lb. of sugar when it comes to the boil. It should boil for one hour. Leave it at the side of the stove some time to get hot gradually before the final boiling-up."

It is certain that the Great War will teach much to the people of our land, and amongst many other industries a greater impetus will be given to jam-making and fruit-preserving. It is to be hoped that vegetable-bottling, which hitherto has remained so largely in German hands, will be more extensively carried out in England.

For many years, those who have endeavoured

to stimulate such work, to bring about a more enlightened, wider outlook, whereby our own home-grown food could be more generally utilised, have had to struggle against the apathy of others. It was so easy to buy at the shop in the town what had been made abroad. Why trouble to do work oneself when it could be done elsewhere? This was the tone in which one's questioning was answered.

It is my firm conviction that, by encouraging educated, thinking ladies to join the profession of Gardencraft, the influence of these new ideas will be more widely disseminated. They, having learnt how much can be grown in England and utilised for our own people, will by their example largely influence those who have not had time or opportunity to study these important subjects.

I now therefore invite the reader to follow me in the proceedings that take place when new students have been through a probationary week at the College and are called upon to decide whether they like the life and intend to remain two years, in order to perfect themselves for the profession. It is customary for them to report themselves to their Principal, Miss More, and, being passed by her as competent for their future studies, they are admitted to my office, when I, as Founder of the College, am asked to give them some words of wholesome advice.

Having got so far in this outline of the day's occurrences, it will be well to explain that the lady who directs their studies is known to us, her intimate circle, as "The Captain," and later on

you will remark that, upon festive occasions, promotion is hastened and the gilt epaulettes of an admiral seem to shadow closely our friend of the lower rank. I must not, however, forestall future events that occur only in play-hours, and I must ask you hurriedly to follow me to the precincts where the serious work of a gardener's life is done.

Our two offices, the latest additions here, are a great joy to their owners, because formerly all business had to be transacted either in my small house or in a dark, somewhat freezing wooden shed, which went by the name of office, but was in its early days a damp and dreary room.

On this particular morning, as the sun streams in through the open windows and gives additional colour to the big bowls of yellow and brown chrysanthemums that are arranged between scarlet leaves of sumach, the garden and its flowers seem to welcome the new-comers. Indeed, we are glad to find that there is a steady increase of students, because the demand for them, when trained, is great, and for some time past has been difficult to satisfy.

The door is wide open, and between the big flower-pots of red fuchsias, that help to conceal a portion of the high white chalk from which the foundation of the house has been hewn, emerges the slender figure of a little lad.

" Please, miss, mother sends word I may work for you each Saturday," says a shrill voice, and a tiny hand goes up in really military fashion to the round, brown cap to salute the new and awe-inspiring chief. There is a note of keen excite-

ment in his voice, and the child's eyes are alternately fascinated by the lady he is addressing and many objects of interest that are before him. The Dutch tiles, representing blue ships, a perfect Armada of sailing-vessels of every shape and date, that surround the fireplace ; then again the plaster-work above upon the wall, where a *semée* of fuchsias, honeysuckle, and other favourite flower emblems show that this is the entrance to the very heart of the Garden School—all to him are wonderful. What the little fellow longs to look at most is the tiny model lighthouse, carved in ivory, that stands upon the marble shelf, which, being the skilled work of Nelson's flag-lieutenant, gives real meaning to the name of " The Captain's Cabin " by which the room is known.

" Come for orders sharp at 8.30 on Saturday morning, Victor," and with a yet more effusive salute than the first one, the boy with the name of good omen vanishes into space, his footsteps alone betraying, as he scurries through the carpet of golden leaves, that he is just a little village boy, breathlessly running home to tell mother all he has seen in the new War Department that he has been appointed to serve.

But this is not the only young life that has joined our colony. A small white smooth-haired terrier, " Timothy " by name, fresh to his work, being a mere puppy, but, officious like all " new brooms,' is employed usually upon outpost duty. His idea at the moment is to hide a bone in a remote corner somewhere near the entrance to the Captain's Cabin, but conscience, a haunter even of puppies,

together with a sense of importance, bids him drop it hurriedly as he hears footsteps approaching. His two chiefs must be defended, even if the loot snatched from the pig-tub has to be temporarily abandoned. Fortunately, the attacking party is not a very formidable one, and finding that it is only a little girl of twelve, and her nurse, who are not in the least intimidated by his little white, grinning teeth, Timothy retraces his footsteps, feeling that duty has been accomplished and enjoyment will thus be made doubly pleasant. The bone is taken to another resting-place, and quiet reigns once more in the office.

The little girl has come to have a first interview, and she will be, if after a week's trial she remains here, the youngest student that we have ever had. As she is commencing very early in life, it will be necessary for her to remain here four years at least, and during that time she will be educated as a sort of apprentice. Gardencraft is to become her life, her profession, and other studies at school are from now to cease, so that she may concentrate entirely upon the new work. It would be well if others took the sensible view her nurse takes as she discusses with the Principal the future aims of her small charge.

One of the most important factors towards success is the possession of real love for a profession or occupation. Without this, daily work becomes drudgery, and so it is essential to begin early to interest a young girl in what will be her life-work. Even if, at the commencement, she possesses no decided taste for it, in all probability

this will slowly appear and steadily increase side by side with her physical development. Then, too, a profession which comprises, as gardening does, muscular, athletic exertion is readily acquired by a child who knows nothing as yet of stiffness or backaches.

Until quite recently, many looked down upon the profession of Gardencraft, for they imagined it to be a narrow life, restricted as regards its intellectual possibilities ; others considered that women were physically unsuited to it. As in all new professions, there were a certain number of failures at the outset, and these were due to a lack of perception on the part of employers, and partly to the fact that the right type of young woman did not take it up. After some sixteen years of buffetings and cold-shoulderings, a few brilliant examples of the right kind of women gardeners have worked their way up successfully through a small army of non-competents, and the craft is now an established and a coveted one for ladies. The employer, meanwhile, is slowly learning a lesson, and begins to realise that to have a lady as a gardener is a luxury and must not be considered an economical way of reducing the payment of a living wage. A woman gardener, like all head gardeners, should be paid in proportion to the amount of brain-fag, deception, and other disagreeables that, by honesty and intelligent supervision, she rescues her employer from being the victim of. Then too her practical, well-trained skill, her scientific education, deserve remuneration.

All evils bring some compensation with them,

and one of the hopeful signs about these days of the Great War, signs which most surely will be recorded in golden letters by the future historian, is the important part that women have played in leading many national movements. It is unnecessary to enumerate all the inquiries that they have openly or indirectly initiated, the new developments that they have energetically supported. During days of exceptional trial, called upon silently to give up their nearest and dearest, they have done so with the courage that is firmly united to patriotism and therefore recognises no love of self.

Without a murmur, full of hopefulness, they have continued with vigour to do good work, finding thereby that inward satisfaction, if not happiness, which accompanies all honest endeavour. It was only necessary for an expert to hint at a subject which called for inquiry, and the women of England rose to the occasion with that splendidly undeviating determination which is so markedly theirs. Only, perhaps, one important subject was at the outset ignored, and this was the necessity for an increase of energy in all that related to our home-grown food supplies. It is true that the attention of the public, more especially that of the owners of large private gardens, was called to it by the Royal Horticultural Society, and a ready response was shown by the vigour of work whereby gardens were cropped with extra vegetables. At the same time, it must be confessed that the wider aspect of the cultivation of land, wherein is comprised all that concerns a proper utilisation of fruit

for jam-making and preserving, the regulation of markets, the encouragement of co-operative movement, the increased need of cultivating more wheat and other food supplies, was not sufficiently made known by directing heads at the commencement of the war. These important branches were left too much to the chance interest of voluntary workers. But as time goes on and, let us hope, a strong leadership assumes initiative with which to guide us in these matters, it will be realised by all what an important part women farmers and market-gardeners can play.

Other countries have long defeated us in the way of properly picking, packing, and marketing produce. Our railway rates need reducing, and, above all, societies of growers should be formed who could by bulking send vegetables and fruit at a lower cost of transit. The grower and producer, those hard-worked individuals, do not now get the reward they should justly receive for their labour. The man who buys from them, the consumer, can with difficulty get fresh vegetables direct from the grower, and as he probably is the father of a family of boys who will be future soldiers, it is necessary in the health interests of the nation that these two people, the grower and consumer, should be brought into closer contact.

It has been in the hope of eventually helping on co-operation in farming and gardening, which I look upon as one of the most important developments, that I have persevered in maintaining a college for women gardeners. My efforts in this direction have been restricted and insignificant ;

they form a mere drop in the ocean of what will, no doubt, later be done upon a larger scale by others, but they have been undertaken in the hope that each student might eventually be, in however humble a capacity, a guiding influence to others.

Only educated, thinking, foreseeing men and women gardeners can fully gauge the great results that must surely ensue with the increase of co-operation on the land, and it is for this reason especially that the daughters of professional men, landowners, and women who belong to the upper classes are so especially wanted at this time in the profession of Gardencraft.

As one by one the new recruits, in the shape of students, are brought into my " Army " office after an interview with the Principal, it is my endeavour to give them some slight perception of the above ideas. Probably they are much too nervous to carry away any recollection other than that of the two little plaster-work cannon that decorate the chimney corner, or perhaps they may recall later the blue and white tiles that the firelight plays on, where Cavaliers and Roundheads brandish swords. No matter what their powers of sight may grasp, if the one idea remains firmly engrained that it is important national work that they are about to enter on. Each in her small and apparently inconspicuous way is to become one of a co-operative body of willing workers, endeavouring to learn sufficiently, during her two years sheltered within the peaceful hollows of the South Downs, to carry on later independent, useful work for the general good. No one can gainsay that to improve the

quality of fruit and vegetable food is a matter of general welfare, and when, in addition to this, there are further aims, such as making village life more useful and less monotonous, preventing money that rightly belongs to the grower from being wasted upon transit charges and commission, and securing freshly-picked and strengthening vegetable food for the town-dweller, the wide outlook of Gardencraft must be clearly evident to all.

Then, again, little pictures of old-fashioned gardens with which the office walls are decorated recall many quaint ideas that can be gleaned from old books and missals. All these, if carefully studied and reproduced near suitable architectural surroundings of the same date or style, belong to the fine art which is called Garden Design. This is most distinctly a branch that ladies should excel in, for even if at the outset they feel incapable of picturing how a flat field can speedily be converted into a hedged-in, sunk nosegay garden, they soon will learn to exercise their imagination in this respect.

One of our patrons, who is known by the appreciative name of " The Pearl " amongst an admiring band of students, has presented to the college a collection of drawings of Fairy Gardens. Ideas for these have been gleaned from long study of vellum-bound volumes and old paintings ; the stateliness of Versailles with its *tapis vert* and the water gardens of Chantilly are also reflected in them. Here we find treillage bowers, arbours, galleries of woodwork for creepers to clamber over, formal gardens in which Italian oil-jars or terra-cotta bowls

are salient features. They take one back to happy days spent in Italy beneath that deep blue sky, where the dark green restfulness of cypress avenues leads up quietly to the brilliancy of many surprise gardens in which sun-sparkling fountains and foaming waterfalls give a life and buoyancy that are insufficiently known in our quiet and sometimes over-sombre English grounds.

Thus there would seem to be work suited to all tastes and talents, and it is only a matter of selection and then hard work and going ahead ; but the great point to bear in mind is that the highest ideals of the craft are yet waiting to be developed. For this reason, those men and women who have visited other countries, studied foreign methods of packing and marketing, and have had opportunities of seeing the best ornamental gardens, the most closely intercropped market-gardens, are the ones who can assist permanently. Others, less advantageously educated, can but continue in the old groove to which we are accustomed. The moment has come for swift action to be taken by the women of our nation, so that they may be equipped and ready, prepared to carry out these greatly needed improvements when times resume a more even tenor, a more normal aspect.

Other important points where colonies of workers spend much time together are punctuality, implicit obedience to any of the heads, and the exercise of a good example to be displayed by the elders for the emulation of younger members of the band.

These are some of the hints that the new students

are given, upon this autumn day, when they gain their first insight into the life of a gardener and understand what a vast expanse awaiting fruitful cultivation lies before them, comprising not only the life of plants and trees, but the health and happiness of future generations of men and women.

CHAPTER II

HOW THE GARDEN WAS MADE

My garden lies upon a slope facing almost due south, and from the little paved walk that surrounds the house I look down upon terraces and over the roofs of pergolas that follow more or less from east to west the waving bend of the hillside. We are on the lower part of one of the highest beacons of the South Downs, which goes by the somewhat scriptural-sounding name of Mount Caburn. This great hill, standing some 500 feet above the sea, gives shelter from all northerly blasts, and the only wind which works havoc amongst the flowers is the boisterous south-west, which sweeps round the corner of a more southerly range of downs and leaps across a wide valley of marshland to the foot of the garden.

Had I to choose once more a position for a garden, I should be in favour of one like this upon a steep hillside, because it is comparatively easy then to obtain variety and artistic effect. The view from the lowest ground looking upwards is totally different from what one looks down upon from a height, and consequently the unexpected has not to be created by means of innumerable mounds, archways, and enclosures, which, upon

level ground, have to be resorted to in order to avoid monotony. Another advantage is that the work of beginners and those who have to be carefully supervised is more easily scanned from a height.

The windows of the house have a very far-reaching view, for upon one side through the trees can be seen flat green stretches of brookland, in which lie little secluded villages like Ripe and Selmeston, and beyond, where the coast-line takes a sharp bend to Hastings.

This is the country that birds seem most to love, for many are the flights of herons and wild duck that follow apparently the watercourses running westwards towards the river Ouse. With that curiously monotonous song, and the harsh regularity of strong flapping wings, three swans often fly by, keeping as close as they can to the tidal canal, which runs through meadows below my garden till it joins the river out towards the setting sun.

This marshland is called by us who welcome fairies and names that they would favour the "Land of the Glittering Plain," for on a winter's afternoon, or in the evening after a summer's day, the brooks and dykes sparkle with brilliant, dazzling light. Hence, probably, comes the name of "The Shine," which is the one known in the neighbourhood for the widest portion of one of the watercourses.

In front of the house, however, is the nicest view, for on the other side of a wide green valley is a beautiful long low line of downland, running east to west. It is never the same from one year's end

to another, and whether it be when shadows chase across the rounded slopes some sunny April day or in the silent heat-wave of summer, when its greyness alone looks cool, or again when winter snows turn it into something surprisingly tall and white, there is always a secret to be disclosed, a fresh charm to be understood.

But, you will say, it is the garden we have come to see, not the countryside ; and yet in most cases, for preference, both these should be somewhat commingled, especially where the house is only a very small and unpretentious one. Certain it is that, if the lines of woodland or distant hills are seen from a house or garden, there should be co-inciding lines in the pleasure-ground. Nothing should clash or allow a feeling of discord to enter into the peace of a garden. Therefore, when I see my friends, those who are true lovers of nature, unconscious of pergolas and terraces, standing on the small oblong mown lawn below the house, drinking in the beauty of the distant view, I am happiest. Their faces assure me that human hands have not done injury, that one's small gardening efforts have not thrust themselves too obtrusively into the foreground of this beautiful, natural hillside picture.

I feel, too, then, that the main feature of the garden, a wide grass walk which goes down the centre of it, with high, broad banks of flowering shrubs and herbaceous plants upon either side, has found favour. It leads the eye straight from the windows of the house to the fields in the valley below. Although it is long and takes a somewhat

determined initiative of its own—for it does not coincide with the line of hills beyond the valley, but, instead, takes an opposite course—I never regret its existence, in spite of a theory which is sometimes quoted that the most prominent lines in a garden should coincide with those of the distant landscape. There is, however, an exception to this rule when, as in this case, a distinct feature is at the end of the vista. An ancient wooden bridge, such as might occur in one of Morland's Sussex scenes, is in the mid-distance and appears to be the objective of the grass walk. All the other lines, the pergolas and surprise gardens that are subordinate to the chief feature, run parallel to the distant hills, and thus correct any hint of unrest that the over-scrupulous architectural designer might perceive.

One reason that makes me love the long flower borders is that I can always see and admire them, in every passing shade of day or evening light. On a boisterous, untempting day, the parlour window suffices to show them to me, and unlike large, old-fashioned gardens that surround Queen Anne or Georgian houses, I have not to walk through an acre of mown grass or shrubbery before I can pick the flowers. For this reason there is additional interest in the endeavour to obtain a good colour scheme and a never-failing succession of flowers.

The two borders are very much raised towards the back and have the appearance of being high banks of colour, so that, as you walk below along the grass path between them, the flowers are on a level with the eye and, in some cases, high above it. At the back they are outlined by a high wooden

fence upon which grow climbing roses of all kinds. Beyond this comes a small gardener's path, from which the roses can be pruned and attended to, and further back again a beech hedge gives shelter and colour. However much, therefore, the sea breezes blow, and very turbulent they are at times, there is always quiet and stillness along the wide grass walk. Halfway down the garden, a cart-road known to us as " The Cross Roads " goes across diagonally, and here four large Italian oil-jars, gay with scarlet geraniums, and tall posts festooned with ropes on which are roses make a break in the long lines of border.

They, with the central grass walk, continue again upon more level ground beyond " The Cross Roads," and here a width of some 12 feet or more gives ample room for flowering shrubs as well as flowers. Then, before they reach the boundary-line of the garden, which consists of an untrimmed willow hedge beside a brook, the two borders open out to form encircling arms round a wide space of grass. A fine October morning is a good moment to choose for wandering beyond the garden, along a stretch of grass-land, to the old bridge. We then look back northwards to Mount Caburn, crowned by its high British encampment, and can see the features of the grounds stretched out, map-like, in front of us. It was from here, as much as from the house itself, that the lines of the terraces were first of all marked out.

Well do I remember standing on the bridge, and by a previously-arranged signal directing the lime-pit men which way they should heighten or

THE GARDEN IN 1915. IN 1905 IT WAS A CORNFIELD WITHOUT TREES OR SHRUBS.

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lower the stakes that were hammered into the ground to indicate the lines of future surprise gardens, terraces, or shadow walks. They took such an interest in their work, and sometimes, after an interval of a year or so, would come and revisit the special piece of ground they had helped to create, so as to see how the plants and shrubs that had meanwhile grown up had improved it. One of them evinced concern because the tall blue painted uprights that supported some treillage had been slightly blown from an upright position to one side. He deplored that, owing to our impatience in completing the work, we had not waited long enough for the terrace itself to settle, and that consequently, when autumn rains came and were followed by a strong gale, the tall posts were blown slightly out of the perpendicular.

I was often struck by the accuracy of eye with which these men judge a level. It is but seldom necessary to use a spirit level, for their work is unerringly correct; moreover, owing to their work in the chalk-pits, their knowledge of the effect of weather upon rock and the different values of various soils is surprising. For making a garden upon a steep chalk slope I was fortunate to have such workers.

Just now any defects caused by rough and hurried labour, which, after all, tell a tale of interest to those who love one small piece of land, are hardly noticeable. It is the gold and silver of trees, shrubs, and flowers that make the centre of the ground, the pleasure garden, pretty. Groups of birches, horse-chestnuts, and poplars are all golden, and as they

outline chiefly the upper terraces near the house and form hedge-like boundaries to the two acres of flower garden, it would seem that all reached its climax of strong colour in the autumn. Even small apple-trees, baby bushes still, for the first were only planted in 1905–6, are bearing golden leaves, and the waving grass of long asparagus-beds brings the gold yet closer to the ground. One or two touches of strong red are noticeable. These come from groups of sumach, while a bush with spiky thorns, called *Cratægus Aria*, also has fine red leaves; then, too, very large Gascoigne's Scarlet apples continue this colour in the orchards. From amongst the silver-white of starworts in the long border are seen bold groups of red gladiolus. The silver is taken up again by the foliage of alyssum, thyme, and dianthus, and thrown yet higher to the willows of all sizes and shapes that surround many of the gardens. Upon the roof-garden above the two offices are red geraniums and white daisies in Italian terra-cotta pots, the only summer decorations that remain.

The garden is even now, of course, a very young one, and in order to appreciate the difficulties that have had to be overcome to make it the poor, yet perhaps all the more lovable, one that it is, a brief record of its past story is necessary.

My College of Gardening was founded at Glynde in 1902, but in the late autumn of 1905 it was necessary, owing to an increase of students, to supplement the ground then occupied by an additional piece of land. At that time Ragged Lands was a cornfield devoid of house or semblance

of garden, but it was the most convenient site that could be obtained, and so the students and the lime-pit men began their work upon it. A year or so later, the other garden was given up and it became our only work-ground for the College.

The most westerly side was taken in hand first and was planted with bush apples, pears, and plums, wire netting having been previously put round it to prevent rabbits from hurting the slender young trees. A few main paths and one road were pegged out and roughly strewn with clinkers, but the remainder of the five acres was ploughed and sown with mustard, and another portion was sown with vetch. Sheep were penned on this land, and thus it was being enriched but did not necessitate an outlay for labour.

We were very poor in those days, and so the only structure that could be erected for garden use was a large open shed for storing pots and requisites, a portion of which was closed in with boards and had a floor. It was the one place in those early years where shelter could be had from the heavy squalls of rain that suddenly blow up the valley, and together with sweeping gales were amongst the most baffling enemies of the brave pioneer students who worked in the garden. This wooden structure has weathered many storms, but those first gardeners would hardly recognise now its smart interior, all decorated with college colours of red, white, and blue, and filled often with gay bunches of well-grown carnations and other flowers, having their last drink of refreshing water before they are carefully packed to go and enliven the dark rooms

of town-dwellers. The room now is called the "Students' Office," and in it many conferences are held for the discussion of the best methods of work.

The position for my house was soon chosen, and students did a considerable portion of the excavation that was necessary for the foundation, thus gaining knowledge of the very commencement of things in building up a place. In so doing, a glaring, white chalk bank became a very striking and objectionable feature below the house and was long a matter of despairing consideration, for we wondered what could ever flourish sufficiently upon it to conceal the rock-like substance. When the workmen had completed the building and their debris was cleared away, small pocket-like cups were made in the chalk stones that formed the bank and turf sods were fixed in them, turned grass side downwards. A little soft mould was added, and thus happy homes were given to arabis, wallflowers, red valerian, helianthemums, and Wichuriana roses, which form the happy succession of plants that now completely clothe what goes by the name of the House Terrace Bank.

The house itself, a great deal smaller than it is now—for it has had two separate additions—was finished in the summer of 1906. By that time the rough outline of one or two of the main features of the garden, such as the wide grass walk and the borders upon each side, had been pegged out, but terraces, steps, and pergolas came much later. It was indeed a rough, bleak spot for the first few years, without trees or hedges to break the wind, and I think what I minded most were the dreary,

white-grey stretches of ground that I looked down upon, until at length, after the work of excavating and levelling was finished, and grass-seed sown, the tired eye was refreshed with the sight of a green lawn-tennis ground, a wide grass walk, and the turf in the rose-garden.

At first there were no birds. This was a sad disappointment ; but slowly, as small trees that were put in grew larger and climbers on the house, like passion-flower and honeysuckle, formed even in winter some slight protection, they came to us. Now, even in early December, as I walk across the square, paved piazza to the front door, there is a sudden rustle, out of the leaves comes a quick flash, and away goes some little winged creature, to wait until I am securely inside before returning to his hiding-place. Only those who have lived, somewhat like a settler, upon a field and have gradually, year by year, made a garden of a portion of the countryside, realise what it is to hear no nightingale or cuckoo, to see no little tits or finches, but to have only the song of the lark and the whirr of the fieldfares' wings for company. Silent days without movement or song of birds count but little, even where a colony of human workers fills past months and years with innumerable interests. Then, with the growth of trees, and as roses, honeysuckle, and clematis made dense pergola roofs, the silent, shadeless hillside changed completely. On a summer's morning I am now awakened by song, and all through the day there is life and movement, and the foliage that has increased and gives happy homes to so many creatures also protects me and

the gardeners from the heat of the sun. Formerly, owing to the exposed, open position and dazzling glare of light upon the white chalk land, the summer noontime was very trying. Relief from it could only be obtained by adopting Italian methods and having rooms kept dark by wooden shutters, where cool, dim light could occasionally be sought.

Another comfort came with the London paving-stones—fine, irregular-shaped pieces of York slab—which form the " Piazza," where we sit in shadow, and the walk that opens from it and goes round the house. Until they were put down, dust blew continually in at the windows, for the rock plants that now creep firmly between the paving-stones and cover all bare earth were at first too small to clothe the ground, and consequently dust was everywhere. It returned tenaciously to tables and chairs indoors, thus being an hourly trial to the housekeeper.

How the Channel wind used to rage, too, before the raised banks had been formed to act as barriers ! Frame-lights, house shutters, even windows have been known to be caught in a whirlwind and hurled down the hill. The gale raged so fiercely one day that it upset the nerves of a Frenchman and his wife who for some time looked after my small house. This *ménage* was so alarmed that they hardly left me alone while it lasted, and seemed astonished at my being able to continue uninterruptedly my writing. At each shock of the angry wind, Alphonse would exclaim, " Ah, *c'est la fin de tout!* " But like a strong, well-built little ship, the house weathered those first trying years, and now, with increased size and a projecting

wing upon the weather side, we sleep peacefully whilst only the distant sound of anger in the gale reminds us of past times.

Many of those friends, both men and women fellow-workers who gave such devoted, generous assistance during times of discouragement, have passed to other spheres of helpfulness. Theirs was indeed a hard fight, because insect pests, weather elements, and limited outlay were all added to the difficulties of educational work. They are never forgotten, however, by me and the Sussex garden to which they gave such valuable advice and unstinted sacrifice of time, and each success that is due to them is recorded as such and gratefully acknowledged.

Each year new terrace gardens have been made, in order to show students how to exercise their powers of imagination. The Italian hillside vineyards were models for gaining level pieces of ground which would hold water and prevent it running away to the bottom of the garden. We have endeavoured to copy somewhat the colour of the olives by planting ilexes and other soft grey-green shrubs, whilst logan berries, ampelopsis and other climbers are set between on tripods and their long branches trained to form festoons in different directions. Then, to prevent the sun from scorching down too fiercely and making great yawning cracks in the earth, all spare ground is carpeted with Alpines. The spring is the best time to see the terrace gardens, for they are blue with forget-me-nots interspersed with yellow sheets of alyssum, and from amongst these rise narcissus, tulips, and

fritillarias. The garden is indeed then a veritable "*montagne de fleurs*," which was the name that Françoise, the cook of the *ménage*, christened it by, when the soft days of spring made her forget the terrors of winter.

Bit by bit, as profits from sales allowed for the expense of labour, the centre of the ground was laid out for flowers, whilst upon either side about an acre and a quarter was planted as orchard market-gardens, with straight lines of fruit trees and vegetables between them.

We relied much upon rain-water, and as it was possible to collect it in tanks and empty paraffin casks from the house roof and wooden sheds, this sufficed until the number of glass structures increased. A water-diviner then came with his wand, and our troubles were solved by excavating a well according to his directions. As this was in the lowest part of the garden, we found it necessary after a few years to supplement it by a small motor engine which now pumps the well water up the hill to an open tank near the greenhouses.

We began with a small toy greenhouse some eight feet long by six wide, and then each year others followed which will be described in another chapter.

I am often asked by ladies who have been through a course of practical training how they can best start a market-garden. The first thing to choose is a sunny, sheltered site where produce can be forced forward so that it is saleable early in the season and thus secures the highest price. Combined with this, it is important to have land where there is every prospect of obtaining an ample and

good supply of water. It may not be advisable to expend money upon a well or motor pump at the commencement, and in fact the erection of most of the structural improvements can well be postponed, together with the perfecting of the water-supply, until the land itself has been cleansed and put into good heart. The vicinity of a railway station and a good market are all-important factors at the outset. When the ground has been well worked and insect enemies are mastered it will be time to spend capital upon sheds and glass. By doing this slowly, year by year, as general expenses diminish and sales increase, the market-gardener will be certain to prosper. Many fail, owing to a too lavish expenditure of capital at the outset, before their knowledge of the garden, market, and special individual requirements of the place has been acquired. They find then, with bitter disappointment, that greenhouses, potting-sheds, water-tanks are in unsuitable positions and that the money spent upon them would have been better employed in providing labour, manure, and wire netting to keep out marauding rabbits. " Go slow and build up bit by bit " is the advice I like to impress upon beginners.

Experience has taught me that with a moderate amount of capital it would not be difficult to make a profitable garden out of a field in a few years' time, provided one could devote all one's energy to growing only saleable stuff. Even upon chalky ground which has to be fed with endless cartloads of manure, where also, as in my case, every bit of leaf-mould has to be bought and good soil is only

made by taking the top spit off and stacking it upside down for some months, it would be possible, with forethought, to make considerable profit.

Where, however, as at Ragged Lands, educational work is carried on and combined with market-garden sales, it takes many more years to achieve success, and always requires some outside support. So many things, not in themselves profitable, have to be provided for the benefit of the students. For instance, a lecture-room is a necessity, and expert lecturers and teachers have to be engaged. A few specimens of melons, vines, peaches, and such things, which are only paying if grown in masses, must be provided in order to teach the future gardeners. Instead of concentrating all energy upon the cultivation of such varieties of fruit trees and choice vegetables as will be suited to the market selected, it is necessary, where there is a College, to have many different varieties of apples and all kinds of vegetables, so that students may become familiar with them. Ornamental gardens, too, have to be included, to show garden design, and they must be filled with decorative flowers of every description such as are to be found in most gardens, otherwise employers might later on be disappointed with the knowledge and experience of their women-gardeners. It does not always follow that these flowers, effective as they are in a garden, are good for picking and packing.

Thus it will be seen that the market-garden has to be subordinate to the educational branch of the College, and a very considerable sum of money is set aside each year to make good the damage often

innocently and sometimes maliciously done to crops either by over-watering or neglect. I know one educational centre where students made such inroads upon the apples that it was decided they should have their holidays when apple-picking time drew near. The scholars in this instance were all young boys, and they no doubt were exceedingly troublesome to deal with when scarlet, juicy apples hung upon the trees. The injury done to plants by women gardeners is more often caused by excess of care and injudicious treatment than anything else. It is all the same harmful to the profits of a business undertaking, but this is seldom realised by the outside public. Most owners of gardens have lived only in old-established, " made " places, accustomed to have as their staff men who from childhood upwards have been gardeners, experienced in handling tools and at carrying on the even tenor of routine work. It is only natural that the serious difficulties to be overcome by those who teach gardening are unknown to them.

I wish to lay stress upon these troubles, because lately, owing to the Great War, many have turned their attention to national problems, and thus the land question has been considered by ladies who have perhaps, until this year, never given it a thought. With the sudden outburst of impulsiveness, which upon occasion overmasters our habitual insular apathy, there have recently been evolved and revived various societies for increasing our food supplies, cultivating waste spaces, and giving to unemployed typists, secretaries, and others a brief training in gardening and farming, so that women

may amend the temporary shortage of labour caused by men enlisting.

This self-sacrificing work of organisation is in many cases being done by voluntary workers and has the approval of those men experts who form the advisory committees of the Board of Agriculture and the Royal Horticultural Society. Gradually it is to be hoped that these numerous old and new societies, whose work often overlaps and causes wastage of charitable funds, will find it possible to unite their efforts. Perhaps two sisterly branches could be formed, one for the assistance of women farmers and the other for the employment of women gardeners. It will be a fine thing if these years of distressing warfare bring this to pass and if, too, the leadership can be placed in the hands of thoroughly expert men and women, who have lived on the land and thus gained knowledge of the practical requirements for these two professions. This should in no sense exclude others who are laymen and not professionals from giving their assistance and support to industries which concern every British subject.

If organisations such as these could be placed upon a firm and solid foundation, with ample monetary support, and could call to their assistance not only the advice of able women but also the wider experience and active co-operation of men experts, they would indeed prove a boon to the fully trained women who work on the land. In all the varied work that women are now called upon to do, those who can advise them best and suggest improvement of methods are people who,

following in some cases their fathers' footsteps, have devoted their lives to a special calling. Women are comparatively novices in agriculture and horticulture, and consequently, as is the case in all valuable work, they require the united effort of both men and women upon committees which concern these professions. With the strength and support which such leadership would give, much could be accomplished which has waited over-long to be commenced. One of the most important developments would be a complete register of all those who are employed as farmers and gardeners, and this should show an accurate record of their past life experience. Nothing would strengthen more the hands of those who direct schools and educational centres than such a register, for it should prevent short, incomplete courses of training being tolerated. It would also distinguish the disciplined, willing worker from the careless one. It would prevent once and for all the uninitiated from advising some young secretary or governess to " try her hand at gardening for a few weeks' course," which is sometimes suggested and adopted, but proves to be waste of money and time. Short courses may, perhaps, in an emergency be undertaken to gain some smattering of certain farm work, such as milking, poultry-keeping, and hoeing between crops ; but a gardener cannot hope to be really useful under a two-years course of training, and then she will only be suitable for a small post.

Other matters which call urgently for decision are the laws of employer and employed, the just payment of a living wage, for where a lady holds a post

which previously belonged not only to a man, but to a man in a different sphere of life, it is difficult for the employer to know exactly what is a fair salary.

It is not only for ladies who work for others that leadership and guidance are required. I hope that the day is not far distant when the farmer and grower, whether man or woman, will receive greater stimulus and direction from Government, when information of a more generally helpful kind, particularly necessary when all has to be readjusted after the war, will be made known, as always has been done in Belgium, Denmark, and Canada. Perhaps a very few old-fashioned people who still live on the land may laughingly contend that they do not intend to utilise such information, but they will be in a minority. It must be remembered that times have changed and educational work has progressed in these professions. Not only are there many experimental stations and colleges, but a great number of highly educated men and women are taking courses at them, and this progress calls for more direct guidance from headquarters, so that all individual work may lead to national results. Much that is now disseminated by means of voluntary effort should be assisted and lightened by the advice of paid experts, men, and perhaps women too, who will get easily in touch with the farmer and not be looked upon as either amateurs or too presuming in manner. Good leadership is the crying need ; it will help the British farmer to increase his supplies and guide the grower so that he may be on a level with those successful ones who flourish in other countries.

CHAPTER III

THE MOONLIGHT LECTURE

It is one of those absolutely still, mild November evenings that we sometimes get after a boisterous, windy midday. A reason, perhaps, why those who know this South Down country well love it above all other lands is the infinite variety of moods that one short day will often display. We are thus reminded of those attractive people who possess a gift of adapting themselves to all circumstances, who can be happy with the joyful, buoyant with the hopeful, and yet retain a reserve of silence, that peaceful power of still enjoyment which perhaps is the greatest charm of all.

To-night it is in this silent, most perfect mood that the garden welcomes me. It means that for some hours, probably until midnight, when the tide, some six or eight miles away, is rising fast, hardly a leaf will stir. Earlier in the evening, the leaves of the willows and young poplar trees upon the little terrace round my house were rustling restlessly, for sharp gusts of wind shook their branches. Now, however, they hold quite still, as if they too were drinking in to the full the loveliness of this calm moonlight night. The only sound that at intervals echoes from across the valley is the

rush of a motor-car or the hoot with which it passes the cross-roads, and this gives a pleasant sensation of being within reach of the active world, though unmolested by it.

It seems incredible to think that only on the other side of a narrow silver stretch of sea, which alone protects our land, a bombardment is taking place more prolonged and deadlier than any battles that have ever been before in the whole world's history. The issue, whatever it may be, must mean vast changes to us all, and yet but yesterday a Sussex labourer, in speaking of the war, exclaimed with satisfaction, " Well ! at all events, the Germans have not yet got into France ! " He is by no means an ignorant man. He can read and write, he talks politics, and does his spadework well, but such is the slowness of dear Sussex that the geography of Europe conveys nothing to the labourer. He possesses also to a considerable degree that refreshingly optimistic conviction, which no reverses will shake, that his own country must eventually win in the struggle.

Why is it that fresh ideas are so reluctantly considered and that even progress in agricultural development moves but tardily here ?

Perhaps it can be accounted for by the fact that, some few hundred years ago, the Weald was still an almost impenetrable forest, and the tradition of it lingers yet with village children, who in some parts direct us to what they call " the forest," which we find to be gorse and heather-grown common land devoid of trees. Certain it is that the great open stretches of downs, free of dwellings

and with remote villages nestling only in the hollows far from railway or high roads, keep the hearts of the people as simple as they were before the rise of mechanical and commercial England. During the days of tense anxiety that so many families are passing through, it is with very real thankfulness that we raise a prayer of gratitude for having up to now, in this wide expanse of peaceful country, had only distant reminders of the fierce and bitter struggle that is going on in other lands.

The moon shines over the steep slope of garden with the valley below it, and high above the long, low line of downland opposite is one very bright star, which is always the earliest to appear and heralds the coming of many twinkling lights from the small cottages scattered across the plain. It is by moonlight that we see best the very subtle, varied outline of the downs, for in the daytime, maybe, the different colours and moving shadows draw attention to other beauties. At night, standing out dark-blue against a lighter sky, every small rise or fall of ground is noticeable, and very rhythmical and beautiful the line is, as seen from my house, rising slowly from the direction of Newhaven until it culminates in the high, bold line of Firle Beacon.

What different impressions a garden gives at night ! We then depend upon the shape and form of trees and leaves for the chief effects, and flowers become secondary objects. First, as I leave the house, there is the jessamine and honeysuckle arch, betrayed by its fragrant scent, that leads by the

paved walk to where stand two Dorothy Perkins roses in big wooden tubs, trained to fall weeping over circular hoops. These two are upon either side of the wide steps that go to the grass terrace below and seem to keep watch like two sentinels on duty. Then, the most striking forms are those of a couple of tall dark bay trees, clipped to look like orange trees. Indeed, by this light, standing in their massive Italian terra-cotta pots, all decorated with graceful moulded garlands, they might almost be guarding the steps leading to terraces in a Florentine villa garden. In reality, they lead to where a second flight of stairs descends to the central grass walk between the wide herbaceous borders.

This is not the way we go to-night, for the moonlight lecture takes place in the very heart of the garden, near the potting-shed and frame ground where all thought and material is to be found for rearing healthy, sturdy plants. Already, on the high ground where the greenhouses stand, like crystal treasure-houses in the white moonlight, little glowing red lanterns are seen flitting to and fro, carried by students who run in search of tools that may be required.

I pass round the second small bow of the house, and as I fondly touch the thick, sweet-smelling bush of rosemary that grows against it, I find myself in an illuminated arbour. A bright, warm light shines through the window of the Captain's Cabin, and makes the treillage-roofed, little paved courtyard seem like the background to a scene in a play. A favourite pale-blue colour which is much

used in the garden and was chosen because it recalls the beautifully weathered blue-green waggons, so often met with in narrow, winding Sussex lanes, looks well when lit up at night. This is the colour of the tall, square, wooden uprights that support the square-mesh treillage roof in this little garden, and through the window I can see the same blue, within the room, for a group of slim young girls, with scarves and coats of this colour, stand talking round the fire. They are discussing with their Chief the best-grown flowers and specimens of apples that are to be taken next day to a neighbouring flower-show. It is a pretty picture, as they stand in a circle, noting in their pocket-books the duties that are chosen for each to fulfil. By the smiling, interested faces upon which the firelight flickers, one might imagine that it was the figure of a cotillon that they were discussing, and not the strenuous work of a flower-show day. It needs indeed some courage and energy to rise by candle-light on a dull winter's morning and pack flowers and fruit in time to run the trolley-load to the station for a 7 a.m. train. If, however, a silver medal or even an illuminated commendation card is carried home at night, the reward is ample for all previous work.

But the wide swing gate on the road above has flown back with a screech of impatience at being disturbed again after closing hours, and this announces the arrival of the lecturer. A short, dark figure is seen advancing, holding evidently a most precious charge, a neatly-packed brown paper parcel, in his arms. Its size and shape resemble an

Italian " bambino," and the kindly face with the black beard, somewhat as a nurse glories in the weight and healthy appearance of her baby, looks down with pride and pleasure as the wrappings are taken off and a well-grown specimen of celery is seen. Meawhile, pale-blue jackets and brown caps from the Captain's office and fifteen glow-worm lamps attached to other students are all collected in the potting-shed, where together with the electric light a dazzling illumination helps to display the beauty of this tall, straight vegetable with its waving, somewhat feathery leaves.

All the lanterns are raised in salute as the plant is held up in our midst, and with some trepidation a rather inferior specimen grown in the garden here is compared with it. " Gardening is not learnt in a day," says the gentle-hearted teacher, and with this prelude he commences an accurate description of the various stages of cultivation that lead to good results. It all seems so simple and easy that we feel sure that next year, in spite of the difficulties that are met with on a chalk soil, we shall be able with his watchful care to carry off a first prize for celery. He is far-famed for success with this particular vegetable, which, together with mushrooms, the latter grown in great vaulted caves beneath a railway arch, are his great speciality. " Next year, you will grow some better than mine," and with this encouraging word in their ears, the students gather round him and their Chief, who together lead the way to where the first mushroom bed of the season has been made up.

It is in the stove-house, and as there is not room

for more than five people with their lanterns to enter, we, many of us, stand outside. The temperature within is high, and it is only by choosing little clear spaces in the glass, where steam is not running down, that it is possible to watch exactly what is taking place inside the house. One tomboy student, with her nose considerably flattened against the glass so that nothing shall escape her, exclaims in a barely audible whisper, " I am sure I have put the globe upside down on Miss More's hurricane lantern ! " If this mistake has really occurred, it does not seem to affect the movements of those in the greenhouse. Four blue figures and one black one are now, as if in some form of Eastern worship, apparently prostrating themselves upon their knees, to examine the mushroom bed, which a week ago was spawned beneath the stage of the greenhouse. A delighted cry goes up, " The spawn is running ! " It is echoed at once by those outside, and all the little note-books, with pencils attached, are pulled from coat pockets in order to record the date when this success has occurred and the hints for future treatment that are subsequently given by the lecturer when he again rises to a standing position, after prolonged groping and scratching in various parts of the rich mould.

Suddenly, the silence of the countryside is broken by the sound of violent explosions, followed by wild shouts from men and boys, and again more noise of crackling ammunition. What is the meaning of it all ? Have the Germans made a raid ? If so, judging by the ringing English cheers that now go up, quickly following one another and

accompanied apparently by shooting rockets, the victory has easily been achieved by our side. No! it is but another remnant of old Sussex tradition—a survival of the anniversary of Guy Fawkes and his Gunpowder Plot on the 5th of November. In the neighbouring, quaint old town of Lewes and in all the villages around there are merry-makings, fireworks, rockets, bands, all culminating in one big bonfire in some central position where crowds can stand and see an imaginary effigy of some conspirator thrown upon the fire to be greedily eaten up by enveloping flames. This year the effigy that may be in the minds of most will in all probability be that of the leader of our foe.

This is, however, only a momentary interlude to the gardeners' studies. It is getting late, and all have been at work since eight in the morning, with short interruptions for dinner and tea, and so the glow-worm lanterns run off in detachments to collect forks and spades for earthing up celery should they be required. Others go to the Students' Office, where objects long and narrow, resembling primitive footlights, are found and carried to the ground that is to be utilised. There are holes pierced at regular intervals in these wooden stands and candles are fitted into them which upon an absolutely calm night, like the present one, give a most useful addition to the light of the moon and the glow of the hurricane lanterns.

I should here explain that it is not by choice that we select a time after sunset for practical demonstration. It must be remembered that it is war time, and that although we in Sussex are but a

tiny unit in the world's history, yet we are greatly affected by the war. It has hit our small colony of women workers, as it has made itself felt amongst each family throughout England. All requisites, manures, food-stuffs are doubled in price, sales of produce have dwindled because the consumer is economising, men-gardeners have gone to the front, and only boys or men past the age for recruits are left to work, and the result of all these numerous difficulties is felt even in additional degree by the practical market-gardeners who come to lecture and demonstrate work to the students. Consequently, we are forced to have lectures only at such times as these busy workers, who are now handicapped by a shortage of labour, can be spared from their own gardens.

The Principal of the College believes in practical demonstration as a means of teaching women gardeners, and this is why to-night all hands are now employed one way or another in assisting to earth up a long line of celery that runs between baby apple trees in one of the market-garden orchards. Some are told to attend to the footlights and place them so that a convenient light is cast upon the line of celery. Others with a fork ease the earth upon either side in order that the lecturer may demonstrate how with one hand all the leaves of a celery plant are held firmly, whilst the other hand pats a bank of earth right up close to the leaves of the plant. There is no tying, but some knack is required when the leaves of the plant are transferred from one hand to the other so that the same patting up of earth can be resorted to

upon the other side of the plant. One by one the students each do this to some three or four plants, after which the row is completed and will bear close inspection by daylight the following day.

There is as great an art in knowing how to learn as there is in rightly imparting instruction. A lack of careful observation is very noticeable amongst women when first they try to undertake manual work such as hoeing, earthing up plants, or digging. Particularly is this the case with those who do not play games such as tennis, golf, or cricket. They are apt to hurry too much and do not wait to consider how they can most expeditiously set to work. It has consequently always been my endeavour to obtain only practical workers as their teachers, men who have been of necessity obliged to carry out work thoroughly and quickly. By watching very carefully how they use their tools, women soon become adepts themselves at such outdoor work.

It must not be thought from this account of somewhat unique moonlight garden studies that we do not possess a real lecture-room. A year ago, this welcome addition to the general comfort was established, and, humble as it is in appearance, we value it for its convenience. Before then, lectures took place in my small house, but although this suited the students, I found that the long, lugubrious faces of my maids betrayed the fact that muddy boots, which often caused legs of chairs to be scratched and temporarily disfigured, were not welcomed by the household. Therefore a long wooden structure, about forty-two feet long by

fifteen feet wide, with a strong resemblance outside to Noah's Ark and inside to a Colonial Mission Room, was erected some few hundred yards from the house. It is a most friendly, homely room, heated by a stove, and its shape and good floor make it ideal for dancing. It is seen at its best when, some time in December, the annual Founder's tea-party takes place, and we adjourn there afterwards for a dance.

This is perhaps as strenuous a day of enjoyment as any working day is tense in activity. Playtime is an important factor in the lives of young women, and our Captain fully realises it, for it is her secret hope that these years of preparation for a wider field of work will be amongst the happiest and that our women-gardeners will in the midst of future duties look back to them as to an oasis of enjoyment.

Upon this eventful day two separate parties of workers are busy making all necessary preparations, and it is difficult to decide as to which are most actively employed. Outside the Lecture Hall stands a row of hob-nailed boots, because the ballroom floor has to be treated with due respect, for it is wonderful what stockinged feet will do with dusters wound round them, and a tin of French chalk scattered over the boards and then vigorously rubbed in. Then the roof within is hung with Japanese paper lanterns, all in shades of red, pink, and green. One or two very large ones, with portraits of our King, are placed in the most conspicuous places, and small flags are nailed in groups to the beams that run across the room. Wreaths

of ivy and other evergreens freshly picked from the garden make festoons round many picture frames with plans of gardens that decorate the wooden walls, and the little raised stage at the end, where the band will be, is gay with Soleil d'Or narcissus and boxes of other bulbs. In the centre of the room, suspended from a beam, is a basket of red and white carnations. Perhaps the most amusing features of it all are the lines of small sailing-ships and green and red baby watering-cans that hang as emblems of the childish spirit that pervades the gardeners, tokens only of what the local penny bazaar can provide, but none the less effective because of their lowly origin. As the big doors are thrown open and several slim figures are seen waltzing round whilst others stand on ladders, hammer and nails in hand to put the finishing touches, the Colonial Mission room is forgotten, for it has been transformed into a very charming Gardeners' Bower.

Meanwhile, another detachment of workers is busy in the Long Parlour of my small house, converting a wooden trestle table into a groaning, decorated festive board. So intent are we with the work that time slips quickly by and the winter's afternoon has nearly sped away before all the many parcels of cakes, sweeties, scones, buns, and creamy pastries have been unpacked and arranged on plates or in blue bowls. One large cake all iced over with white sugar is placed in front of my chair, for it has inscribed upon it in large red letters "Happy Christmas and New Year's wishes to my Gardeners." Another, coated with rich brown

"THE CAPTAIN."

chocolate, emerges from its cardboard box as one tall cake, whereas, when it started on its journey, it was intended to be produced as three flat low ones; but this slight misfortune of the three sticking together in transit only makes the taste all the more generously creamy and chocolaty! Then, in the centre of the long, narrow table and at intervals where cakes do not take up all the room, are tall vases with red and white carnations, and interspersed with them are red, white, and blue ribbons. The table is laid for twenty-five, and punctual to the minute, at half-past four, the guests arrive.

It is etiquette at such festivities for all to enter together, and therefore any connected conversation is interrupted for the first few minutes by continued handshakes. It is true we have all met before to-day, but then my gardeners were only in their workday clothes, and now I see before me pretty, graceful figures in light dresses of many colours. Several, through hard work and attention to their duties, have earned medals, and to-night is an occasion for wearing them. They consist of very delicately wrought enamel flowers, the clever work of a woman artist, and are suspended by a red ribbon to either one or two clasps, according to the efficient services of the possessor. It is, I feel sure, as proud a moment for me as it is for them when these are worn, for it is proof that past years devoted to work here have not proved fruitless. Two of these head students now present little posies of sweet-smelling flowers to their Principal and to me.

All this little ceremony takes place in a comparatively empty room, where there is space for so large a number to circulate. The walls would seem appropriate to gardeners, for round them is a plaster-work frieze of bold Italian style, showing garlands of vine-leaves, and hanging between are represented handsome branches of grapes. The ceiling itself has a narrow light pattern of slender vine tendrils with baby leaves and recalls the ornamentation often found in old Elizabethan houses carried out at a time when Italian workmen were much employed in England. Above the fireplace, also in plaster-work, are the arms of the Worshipful Company of Gardeners, who have done me the honour of making me one of their number. Here is seen the lithe, muscular figure of Adam digging, but the artist has allowed himself the pleasure of depicting a carpet of all kinds of lovely flowers, such as fritillarias, lilies of the valley, and Madonna lilies, so that apparently there are no weeds in this earthly Paradise for Adam's heart-shaped spade to demolish, and moreover all these flowers appear to flourish together at the same season of the year. Artists are allowed these privileges, which even skilled gardeners could not accomplish out of doors.

Tea is essentially the gardeners' meal, and so without further thought of our first ancestor the smiling Eves of my garden adjourn to the Carnation Parlour, where speedily the cutting of cakes is followed by a noise of crackers, accompanied by peals of laughter when burning paper aeroplanes ascend, puffed at vigorously by the youngest guests.

Paper caps of varied shapes and colours, dazzling tinsel jewels and paper fans emerge from the Christmas crackers, and as we see one another decorated by them, it would seem that the clock had been pushed back some twenty years, and even more. Are we not all of us again little short-frocked, muslin-dressed girls, with plaited hair and smiling children's faces? Certainly in spirit we resemble the smallest of the party, the little dark-haired girl of fourteen, who still goes by the happy nickname of " Boy."

But the fun is now only beginning, for several active members of the " Arrangement Committee " stealthily glide away to light up and make ready the ballroom, whilst the majority are left to laugh and talk awhile longer, before they slip into goloshes and coats, with gay-coloured scarves wreathed about their heads in which to brave the elements of December in their flight to the lecture-room.

Three tall, sombre, cloaked figures with slouch hats enter the orchard gate with us. Are they brigands, or maybe German spies? A word of explanation is sufficient to allay anxiety, and when their cloaks and hats are flung aside, we realise that even our musicians have donned pale blue uniforms in honour of our favourite colour.

Is it not recorded that amongst certain tribes magic dances are performed to secure a supply of food? In ancient Mexico the women used to toss their hair as they danced, so that the maize might have long, waving tassels, and to this day in Europe peasant maidens dance and leap high to make the flax grow. It seems to-night that piano,

violin, and flute are in league with my group of pretty gardeners, and carried away by the enthusiasm of their graceful leader, Miss More, they seek to revive this sympathetic magic. Surely our vegetables and flowers this coming year will win silver medals galore for vigorous and graceful growth, if dancing can be prophetic ? Even when, after some hours, the flickering candles inside the many-coloured Japanese lanterns betray weakness, and when our Viennese band again assumes its mask of brigand cloak and hat, this spirit of energy and vigour yet prevails amongst the gardeners. Nor is it stemmed by that exciting and yet somewhat painful game called " Snapdragon," when raisins are snatched from a bowl of fire and fingertips suffer, or when " She's a Jolly Good Fellow " is vigorously sung and each thinks the other must be the one who is so warmly appreciated. Only, perhaps, comes momentary calm with the hand-linked-to-hand chain when " Auld Lang Syne," sung by clear young voices, rings out through the wide-open doors to warm the hearts of old village folk in the great Weald below. A fitting close indeed to this year's many days of work, play, and good comradeship.

CHAPTER IV

THE ADMIRAL'S TEA-PARTY

Our College term ends about a week before Christmas. I am reminded of this as I sit at breakfast, whilst the sun is slowly rising above the tall Beacon of Downland across the valley, for two little, neat pale-blue envelopes are handed to me by the maid. They bear no postmark and come evidently from students. Each contains a simply-worded letter of thanks for a year spent at work in the gardens, a year, I am assured, that will never be forgotten, as it has brought, in each case, not only happy playtime but new interests in life and the possibility of future gardening careers. The little notes both end with such touching words of thanks that they leave me with a distressed feeling of the small amount that I have personally been able to offer or give in the shape of help or lectures, an almost guilty sensation, in fact, of being the recipient of an undue amount of gratitude. The youthfully genuine words " awfully happy " are proof, however, that the writers mean what they say, and it is with evident, true regret that they remind me this is the last day upon which they will work here, as both are called away to fulfil temporarily home duties before they begin serious professional work.

Whilst I am still sipping my cup of coffee, rejoicing in the warm, sunny days of winter that we who live near the coast can often revel in, the door opens and a welcome visitor arrives. It is the Principal of the College. She comes to tell me of a long but successful expedition, undertaken the previous day to direct the work of men-gardeners at a place in Surrey. She and two elder students attend there alternately, at regular intervals, to supervise, and the report that she is now able to give me as to the satisfaction of the owner of the garden and the improvement that is noticeable in the work of the men under her direction is very encouraging. I also hear that the writers of the little blue notes that I have just now read performed a masterpiece this week at a garden in Sussex, when between the hours of ten and four they planted over 2,000 plants in a new herbaceous border, according to a colour scheme arranged by our College. They had as onlookers the lady who employed them as well as her butler and chauffeur. These three stood round whilst one wooden case after another, full of plants, was opened and the contents carefully arranged upon the border and then planted.

The morning is always a bright one when I hear of work satisfactorily accomplished by my young women, for each undertaking carefully fulfilled adds not only to the renown of gardeners, but is also a step up the ladder towards the good opinion that the outside world forms of any professional work done by women. Until recently, there have been sadly noticeable signs of doubt in the minds of

many as to whether women were capable of taking the place of men in certain branches of work. Each satisfactory achievement naturally weakens this unbelief and helps on the cause of women workers.

I must not, however, allow the interest of this wide subject to lead me to digress from the daily life of a garden school, which it is my endeavour to represent to others.

Breakfast is over. The Principal and I separate, going each to her various avocations, but not before I have been told the exact hour at which I am to attend her tea-party, which takes place to-day, a fitting festive termination to many weeks of hard work. The party is to be a fancy-dress one, but I, as Founder of the College, am allowed the exceptional privilege of wearing ordinary twentieth-century clothes. This is a relief to my mind, and I consider it most in keeping with my office of " Eye-witness " or Recorder of the merry doings at this very original and delightful entertainment.

The afternoon of the December day begins to darken early. Shortly before four o'clock I set out on foot for my two-mile walk, carrying an overcoat for the return journey and a brown paper parcel containing my shoes for the party. The weather commences to look threatening, and I ask myself whether it will hold out fine until all the guests have arrived. This is my sincere wish, and indeed I see it is shared by many others, for as I reach the village several fellow-guests emerge from their homes, and on the face of each is a look of absorbed anxiety. Should rain come it may do damage to

the costume that no doubt is hidden beneath the long, enveloping cloak.

Our village makes a very charming picture on a winter's evening, for the houses stand clustered round one brightly illuminated shop. The high-roofed, old-fashioned cottages with their queer-shaped, big chimneys look black against the sky. The small windows, with their leaded lights, are dark as yet, for no one wishes to light up before it is absolutely necessary, so that all the brilliant warm glow comes from the bay window of the shop across the narrow street. Here everything that heart of man, woman, or child can wish for is to be obtained, from tobacco, familiarly called " shag," to Vim or Ronuk for cleaning, and then again to luscious pepperminty brown bulls'-eyes that stand in bottles where boys and girls can see them best. How all the little Carter's Pills, boot-laces, bananas, and Monkey Brand soap can be kept from becoming hopelessly mixed up with each other and the postage stamps is a riddle that I often try to solve. It is proof that an hereditary instinct for organisation and orderliness has been transmitted from father to son, who have successively owned the same business since the eighteenth century. A strong inclination to Conservatism is also represented, for the same shiny brown tobacco-jar, standing upon a shelf purposely scooped out and enlarged to support it, has held that consolation of the working man for over a hundred years.

It is wonderful indeed what valuable past history lies sheltered still in the hollows at the foot of our hills. As in early days of husbandry when Plan-

tagenet kings reigned, each little Downland village still possesses one or two houses of pretension. There is the lord's house, or manor, and sometimes a parish was divided among two overlords and consequently two large houses remain. Even if the actual buildings have been destroyed, we know that they were not far distant from the present ones. Usually a winding village street leads to cross-roads, and here, grouped round or near the church, which was once the site of the stockade or fortress, are all the cottages. The curved walls show in some cases which direction the old coach road took as its heavily-laden vehicles swung from side to side. The parson's house and sometimes that of the miller stand out superior to the rest, but all lie snugly, securely close together, where fear had originally dictated that they could best gain protection, in days when the settlers lived in wattle-built huts. Very few distant outstanding homesteads date back to those old days, for men found security in living in groups and communities. Then, too, as each village was more or less self-supporting it was necessary that labour should be commingled and, in our modern sense of the word, co-operative. It is not therefore in the lie of the land or the position of houses and cottages that change has taken place. The difference since those old days consists only in the way land is worked. Each village then raised its own food supply and the cottagers to a large extent made their own linen and cloth. Arable land was in open strips and after the harvest had been gathered it was used by all as common

pasturage. Only with the advent of the enclosure of parks and large properties was this altered, and even now to us who come after there remain the traditional names of fields which show clearly which member of the united community worked them.

My way lies up the steep hill, past a square red-brick Queen Anne vicarage, standing modestly behind its high wall, over which hang branches of fig trees. These in summer often tempt village boyhood to deprive the Church of many righteously owned fruits. The road, or "The Street," as it is familiarly called, leads by a wide opening in a yew hedge, which proclaims the entrance to what village people name "The House," till a lovely, foreign-looking belt of grey-green ilex-trees is reached.

The vista I get on my right of the high, narrow arch beneath a golden, globe-shaped clock-tower, and beyond again to stone piers surmounted by angry-looking griffins that guard the way reminds me of carriage-folk and how we mostly think it necessary to drive to a fancy-dress party. Perhaps the present war, which has robbed great ladies of their motor-cars and caused many a farmer to ride his horse harder than usual, because the military have purchased from his stables, may teach some that their own feet are not always the worst means of reaching their destination. To-night, as the soft wind touches my cheek and the great ilex-trees gently bend towards me, it seems that walking is the ideal way of going to and from a party. Particularly is this so if one is, as I am, about to enter a fairy world. Prosaic, everyday life is left behind, and I am speeding toward a childlike, happy

one. Does this kind of feeling always pervade certain places ? or is it induced by the atmosphere that surrounds certain people and converts their dwellings and immediate neighbourhood into something different from the ordinary world ?

A fat, rosy-cheeked baby-boy, arrayed in fur cap and coat, drives towards me in a small cart drawn by a white goat. He is attended by a boy who guides the animal, restraining it from nibbling grass as it goes on its way, and upon the other side walks a grey-clad figure whose white gloves and uniform proclaim her to be the guardian of this Baby Prince's person. Why is he not coming my way ? I ask. Surely he would love to meet the Little Jack Horners, clowns and sailor-boys that I am going to play with ? He little knows that the cloaked figures who pass by on bicycles are in reality some of these, hastening to the party, so as to have ample time in which to don their costumes and play the right part. One shrouded figure in a long black Italian cloak with a great high-peaked hood apparently has her costume beneath it, for she hurriedly huddles the heavy garment more closely round her lest a boisterous gust of wind should blow it aside and show the finery as she passes. Several other students, carrying mysterious parcels, overtake me, and I notice that each walks alone, as if eschewing her companions. Pleased but absorbed, they seem to avoid all conversation, pursued doubtless by the feminine fear of betraying a secret.

News of the party has already been noised abroad, and as I near my destination two ladies

approach who are indirectly associated with it, for one is the mother of a garden student and the other is her friend. I am, however, congratulated as being the only everyday "grown-up" who is privileged to witness the revels. I almost wish that a kind Fairy would quickly come with her wand and convert me from my essentially modern appearance into a Fairy Prince or Ugly Goblin, so that in taking part in the fun I could have the assurance of being quite in keeping. It is distressing to feel one may be a prosaic blot in the midst of fairies.

The small red-brick farmhouse stands a little way back from the lane and is partly hidden by a thick quick hedge. It is rather like a doll's-house, for in the centre is a very tiny projecting porch, above which a wee stone niche holds the date 1760 and the initials of the original possessor. On either side, on each floor are two windows and three gable ones are in the high, sloping roof. The door and windows are very small, with leaded lights in the latter, and at either end of the house is a tall chimney, which by its shape denotes the age of the building. Against one is a big pear tree, which has seen better days when some skilled eighteenth-century gardener trained its branches in outstretched horizontal lines. At present its limbs are overgrown with lichen and in places have snapped the ties that once held them.

Seen in the half-light of evening, the house reminds me of *Alice in Wonderland* and the picture in that delightful book where Alice's large, ungainly hand is seen thrust out of the cottage window,

trying to frustrate the Rabbit from carrying out his threat of entering that way. Alice, as you know, was much too large for the cottage, because she had somewhat injudiciously put to her lips the magic bottle which had tied to it the tempting label " Drink me." This nectar suddenly caused her to outgrow her surroundings.

One of the tiny windows of Rosedale Cottage—for this is the romantic name of the house of the tea-party—is lit up, and standing near it I see the gold-lace hat and dark-blue uniform of an English Admiral. Like Alice, he looks somewhat too big for the size of the house, but this only adds to the delightful sensation that now possesses me of taking part in a real, living Nursery Rhyme. His white-gloved hand is held up in salute as he notices my arrival, and a pleasant smile flits across the clean-shaven, handsome face. He is young for his position, but the wide brow denotes thought and a firmly-moulded chin shows a determination which should baffle any enemy.

Full of happy anticipation, I walk up the narrow red-brick path, gently knock, and turn the handle of the door. All is dark within, except for a flickering candle on the hall-table and, in the parlour near by, the red glow from the log fire, seen through the half-open door. Stealthily I grope my way to the back of the house, for I know that muddy shoes are forbidden where fairies live. There is a stone-paved room behind the hall, known as the Dairy, and in it are tables and chairs conveniently placed to hold all wraps, mufflers, and goloshes that the dressed-up guests bring with them.

Having smoothed my hair and endeavoured to regain somewhat of a party appearance which the rough wind had sought to destroy, I re-enter the hall, to find darkness and the silence of suspense still prevailing. The ingle-nook in the parlour attracts me with its great oak beam, above which is an overmantel laden with many glittering objects, such as Dutch windmills and brass toys. The room has been purposely cleared of much furniture and only the handsome Empire settee and a few chairs are against the wall together with an oak dresser and the Grandfather clock.

At last another " grown-up " like myself appears. It is the farmer's wife, who is cook and housekeeper combined. I inquire furtively whether I am right in taking up a position in the ingle-nook, and express surprise at her being able to fit so many hungry guests into the house and yet reserve enough space for dancing in the parlour. Silently she beckons me to follow her. Across the hall is another room, which on weekdays is the kitchen, but to-night has been transformed into a dining-hall. This long, narrow room, with its many oak beams running across and great enveloping chimney-corner, into which quite a family party can gather, is brilliant with red, white, and blue decorations. A lamp lights it from above, and in the centre is a very large table, laden with every imaginable delicacy. It is like a fairy supper-party. Each little blue plate—and there are over twenty of them—has stacked upon it gifts for every individual guest. Coloured ribbons hung from the lamp form festoons that unite one layer

of decorations with another. Cakes, buttered buns, and sweeties are heaped upon the table, and between them on the white cloth are gay-looking crackers. The farmer's boys and the little fair-haired Dorothy stand crowded together in the doorway of the back kitchen beyond, shyly waiting to watch my face of pleasure.

But there is a gentle rustle upon the stairs, and I must not betray too much what a youngster I am at heart! Stealthily I slip back into the darkened parlour to perform my office of Recorder to the party. As I settle myself on the sofa to await surprises, a slender figure, shrouded in a dark cloak, enters and in a somewhat plaintive voice says, "Oh, dear! I do feel so uncomfortable, for I could not get enough material for the price, and my clothes are so tight I am dreadfully afraid of splitting them." Here I must explain that this forced economy is part of the enjoyment of the fancy fair! An order was issued, and accompanied all invitations, to the effect that not more than one shilling was to be spent upon each costume. An extra prize was to be given to the dress which cost the fewest number of pence. Thus arose the temptation, to which my friend in the long cloak had doubtless succumbed, of skimping the material in order to win this much-coveted prize. In vain I try to reassure her and express a firm conviction that when her cloak is discarded and she feels quite at home in her dress, all will go well, and no more splits will occur. I am not inquisitive, but I confess that in talking to her I am seized with sudden curiosity as to what is really

hidden from me. I suggest a sitting position as helpful in avoiding "splits," but this idea is peremptorily rejected and a standing attitude is evidently the only one to adopt.

A manly step is now heard advancing, and out of the darkness emerges the brilliant Admiral, his heavy gold epaulettes, long sword, and glittering belt and medals showing up against the dark-blue uniform. He stops for an instant in front of me, and with his heels together makes me a beautiful, graceful salute. Then, moving briskly about the room, his hand dives into his coat-tail pocket in search of a match-box. I notice that everything about him is nautical, for even this little box has, painted on it, a dark-blue sea and yet darker Dreadnoughts and cruisers.

Whilst I intently watch him lighting the many candles that are dispersed about the room, I suddenly become aware that the anxious figure in the cloak is transformed into a smart, slender, white-clad sailor lad. A cap which is hurriedly produced from some recess and is poised at the right angle on his head has a dark-blue band upon which in letters of gold is printed "H.M.S. *Ragged*." The whole position is now explained, and the Land of Let's Pretend is suddenly opened out map-like before me. I am evidently being entertained on board the Admiral's ship, and this sailor-lad is one of his attendant Jack Tars.

"Now sharp's the word," says the Admiral. "What are you idly standing there for, Saunders? Get to your guns and see that Churcher is ready."

Meanwhile, Churcher, who is twin sailor to

Saunders, but appears to have spent a penny or so more upon clothes and consequently moves more briskly and with less of the restrained, hopping movements of his twin, busies himself about arrangements.

The next character that is introduced to me is young " Horatio," named, no doubt, after his ancestor Nelson. He is said to be feeling upset about the German bombardment of Scarborough, which we to-day heard of, and judging by his dejected attitude, one might think he was stuffed with sawdust and that this material was rapidly escaping through his sailor jumpers. He also has inscribed upon his cap " H.M.S. *Ragged*," but his round and strangely protruding, rather unsightly ears are what fill me first with a suspicion that I have met him before, though in some other sphere of existence. Of course ! I remember ! His life-like body is surely that of the doll that usually is a little boy baby but has to-night entered into the spirit of the ship and assumed the name of Horatio with the clothes of a sailor.

The Admiral, however, can hardly restrain his impatience. There is in the parlour close to the ingle-nook a rather charming little architectural feature. It is a recess lined with books, and at the back of it is a very tiny " look-out " window, such as might be on a ship. The two sailors are made to stand to attention in front of this, and then young Horatio, in spite of his *malaise*, is directed by " Father " to sit upon a table near the group. His tender years (we omit all mention of the projecting features that have no *y* before them) do not prevent

his being shown how to salute. The Admiral, fastidious to a degree about the fit of his own sword-belt and the poise of his hat, at length places himself in front of the sailors and stands rigidly to attention.

" Now, my guests, don't delay so long. We all want tea, and you must hurry to get ready," he shouts as if he were commanding a storming-party.

One by one, then, they appear, all the people we have read of in coloured story-books or met when we were children at the circus or the pantomime. I forget the order in which they came, but I found I knew them all. There was no announcing, because we knew " Folly " by the way she skipped in, rattle in hand, her frock all hung with coloured ribbons and at the end of each a little bell. Besides, she had that curious curved head-dress and on it again more bells. Then came the " Clown," and no doubt, had he not been afraid of being too familiar with the Admiral, who of course was standing in such a well-drilled fashion saluting all the guests, the Clown would have turned a somersault as he entered. Young Jack Horner was very quiet. He just walked across the room in his green suit and went and sat in the ingle-nook to finish his pie. Little Dorothy, who was on the sofa beside me, thought this was rather a greedy thing to do considering no one else had had tea. I think she and the youngest student, " Boy," liked the Golliwog best, for when he arrived, I felt a distinct quiver of excitement on the sofa. The Golliwog's hair was so very wonderful. It looked just exactly like a black hearth-mat, and then his

black face and red trousers made him very fine. I dare say the children hardly knew about the Red Cross lady in her long white flowing veil and dress, but she reminded me of *The Talisman* and Crusaders, for she had a beautiful red cross worked upon the front of her gown and her face had that reflective, peaceful look that sheds contentment wherever it goes.

I think it was at tea that we saw them all best, and by that time we were less shy and could talk more easily. The Admiral made me a beautiful bow and gave me his arm to take me to the red dining-hall, and I must confess that I secretly wondered how he could be so skilled in managing his long sword, for I rather suspect he had not worn one like that before, as his promotion was so very recent. After tea, he volunteered some remarks about it and said he thought it was an inherited instinct, handed down from his father. Freed from anxiety in attending to the many requirements of his guests, the cake-cutting and handing of sweets, he then performed some *pas seuls* to music and ended by drawing his sword and placing it on the floor and dancing round it. The Jack Tars could keep quiet no longer, and even Saunders forgot all about the shortage of material and danced a hornpipe. Whilst we were still breathlessly recovering from this wild, yet childish display of spirits, there came the moment so anxiously awaited, when the selection of the prettiest and most original dress was made. Then followed the distribution of prizes for the three best ideas as well as for the cheapest costume. A " Christmas

Night," arranged with white and red crinkly paper and trimmed with wreaths of real ivy, carried off one prize, and " The Fortune-Teller " another, for her costume was partly draped with coloured paper, and on her head was a chamois duster, so well arranged that it reminded me of an Italian peasant's picturesque head-dress. Then the little, slender, quiet, grey Quakeress was attractive, and so was " Night," who was clad in a very thin black material that cost but ½*d.* per yard and had silver paper stars and moons stuck on it. I think Britannia acted her part as well as any, for she is tall and handsome, with a stately presence. The Admiral made her a beautiful speech, and said that at such a moment, whilst the cannon of Europe were thundering, we felt that, in any case, we must offer her a prize, although we knew that victory would speedily be hers.

Just then one of the sailors handed a telegram upon a salver, but the Admiral never soils his white gloves by opening such things and therefore he gave it to another sailor, who tore the envelope apart for him. The message was read aloud : " A gloriously happy evening to you all from the West Wind, whose good wishes are with you although forced to be absent." A little tremor of disappointment went through the audience as the Admiral asked, " You all know who sent that ? " Yes, indeed, we know and love right well the little Fairy Patron and Friend who inspires so many of our " Make Believe " parties.

As I go out into the hushed silence of night and leave these happy, childish spirits still singing and

dancing in the little Wonderland cottage, I realise that some of us are specially blessed, for we shall never grow old. The West Wind keeps whispering this to me all along the little winding country lane as I speed home in the darkness, but for many hours and even days after the tea-party I am still living partly in the happy Land of " Let's Pretend."

CHAPTER V

CHRISTMAS

As the Christmas of 1914 approached, many anticipated that it would be different from other years. A feeling of tension necessarily exists when so fierce a struggle for mastery prevails amongst many nations. Letters that came from distant countries like Australia betrayed anxiety as to the risk of messages not reaching their destination, for there was danger in mine-laid seas or from fast-speeding cruisers. Therefore, as this usually bright and festive season drew near, we wondered, each of us, how we should go through with it, and how friends, anxious about their nearest and dearest, could face it without gloom and depression.

In all large towns the darkened streets and shops added to a sense of something unusual. The busy buyers, intent on getting all necessaries, such as bunches of holly and mistletoe, chestnuts, sweets, turkeys, and plum puddings, that are so essential a part of the old-fashioned English Yuletide, wore anxious faces. Other thoughts were in their minds. They were wondering how the men in the trenches were standing the continuous strain of fighting, how the sailors fared who guard our coasts. There was none of that bright animation that is usually

noticeable as people hurry to secure the most suitable gifts for old friends ; no laughter when the latest invention of mechanical toy was packed away in its cardboard box, ready to surprise the babies. Hurriedly and in the dark the shoppers flew along the streets of Brighton, for the East Coast had already been raided, and our turn might come too at any moment. Yet, with all the tales of *Taubes* flying through the air and news of bombs dropped on English soil, there comes to mind the reassuring recollection that as long ago as 1804 one of the most ambitious leaders of men concentrated much thought upon the invasion of our country, and yet nothing came of it in the end. Although a medal was ordered to be struck, representing Hercules strangling a mermaid, and bearing the legend "*Descente en Angleterre, frappé à Londres*, 1804," it was never required.

One noticeable effect of the war is that much of the rigid reserve of strangers is blown away. Fellow-travellers in the train do not subside in their customary way into a corner and doze quietly after their strenuous shopping, neither do they become engrossed in the contents of a pocket-book, counting up the presents that have been obtained and noting those that were forgotten. They all prefer to impart to others any information they can give about the war. Some one has a brother who, "Thank goodness, has been wounded and now is safely resting in the hospital at the base." I am told that the wound "is only in the thigh, and our family think that on the whole that is the best place that could have been chosen." Others, still mind-

ful of their children, produce from small handbags little penny toys that are wrapped up so carefully in tissue paper that one might suppose they cost a guinea. They explain that this year they have arranged, as a family, to choose no gifts that exceed *2s. 6d.*, for all the savings have to go to help those families of soldiers and sailors who are in distress. Thus, an all-absorbing, all-prevailing thought unites both friends and strangers in one large bond of good-fellowship. The hearts of many are unlocked, all reserve or shyness is dispersed.

A Gardening College is, perhaps, less affected by sadness and depression than other communities of people, for the work that has to be done is clearly of far-reaching national importance and, when this is the case, workers carry with them that light-hearted, contented feeling which accompanies a clear conscience. No hesitation or doubt enters the minds of women gardeners as to whether a different employment would help their country more.

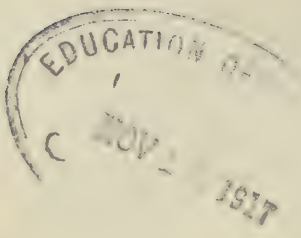
Even the least credulous observers of women's work are aware that women of all nations are rendering splendid service to the State by increasing home-grown food supplies. This winter it has not been a mere apprenticeship in order to learn how to grow plants well or wherein to be observant of routine. A great deal more has been expected from the individual student, for she, like all English women, has been asked to sacrifice herself for the general good. Thus, much that would usually be the work of paid men has fallen to the daily task of students.

Not only has it been their lot to stoke the greenhouse fire, but they must run a trolley to the station laden with boxes and baskets of flowers and vegetables that later have to go by rail. There prevails amongst them a wish to prove to the world that in an emergency they can do manual work in the place of men. Usually their position, when fully trained, would be that of directing, foreseeing heads, able to undertake pruning, watering, and tending of plants with intelligence. They would be called upon to supervise all trenching, digging, and heavy operations, whilst men, who excel at such work owing to their superior muscular strength, would actually execute it. Plants need to be treated like small children, so helpless and dependent are the poor things, for in a greenhouse they are unable to get food or water without help. This lighter side of gardening, which needs so much patience, is best understood by women, but the moment has come for them to show that they are also capable if need be of doing rough, hard work.

In the early autumn, after war was declared, my young women realised that, at last, their chance had come, and that if they could work with precision and method, those doubts so often cast upon their capability would once and for all be dispersed. The feeling that many were looking to them for a supply of fresh vegetables gave new impetus to their endeavours. We who had studied that all-absorbing subject of marketing, only to be learnt and carried out when early years of practical instruction are surmounted, knew that vast changes were to be brought about in consequence of the war.

It was evident that owing to the increase in price of most eatables the poor, both in towns and in country villages, would have to be careful of money. Even a fourpenny return ticket to a neighbouring town has to be considered before it is bought. Never before have hawkers with their barrows of vegetables and apples had such prosperous days, for shops have increased their prices and therefore the man who grows stuff in his own garden and can sell direct to the consumer, taking the cabbages or onions to each door, is extra welcome this year. The prospect of being able to supply fresh vegetables to our villagers and thereby increase our market-garden sales seemed desirable, and so it has come about that upon a regular day each week students go forth from the garden, rolling behind them a wooden hand-barrow, upon which, in neat bundles, are disposed all sorts of tempting-looking vegetables. It is long and narrow, painted light blue, and has two wheels. From the corners rise up four slender uprights, and to these are attached small flags of many colours. This makes it look exceedingly gay and gives a patriotic appearance to its somewhat coster-barrow semblance as it trundles down the steep hill, surrounded by a band of youthful, good-looking attendants. The big garden bell, that usually does office as a reminder that work hours commence or cease, is taken too, and once the village is reached, its deep-sounding notes warn the housewives that they should come to their doors and select the vegetables of their choice. As the cottages all the way up the village street are visited, the hand-

THE VEGETABLE TROLLY.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barrow becomes lighter, for the amount of produce is diminished by sales. Then commences the work of two of the group of students who have brought bicycles with them for reinforcement duty. If more brussels sprouts or celery be required, they mount and ride home for fresh supplies, returning with these safely stowed away in wooden Sussex trugs that rest upon their handle-bars. After an hour or two thus spent, all the busy workers return with money jingling in a purse and the satisfactory feeling that many a poor cottage has secured fresh vegetables for its inmates, and that the mother of the family has been saved a toilsome walk into the country town some three miles distant. Thus this terrible war is not only showing the value of women-gardeners, but slowly our nation is also learning, what other countries have long ago brought into practice, that a closer connection between growers and consumers is beneficial to both parties.

Those who live in towns often accustom themselves to relying upon the neighbouring greengrocer's shop for a considerable portion of their children's food supply. Perhaps they have never owned land and therefore do not realise the difference there is between stale vegetables and those that come direct from a garden. Most of the fruit and vegetables that we see displayed very temptingly in shop windows have had a long and dusty railway journey, and perhaps a lengthened sojourn in Covent Garden Market. It can, therefore, not contain the same amount of health-giving food value as produce which is picked in the early

morning hours and handed to the cook in time for the midday meal.

Year by year the interests of the townsman have become further removed from any direct contact with the toiler on the land. He has sought the help of intermediaries to bring fresh eggs and vegetables to his door. When once he awakens to all that our English land can give to those who wish for it, then it will be found that there are growers in large numbers in each suburb who will welcome direct business transactions with him.

I always know when Christmas is near at hand, because of the large brown-paper parcels that lie half-opened on the floor of the Captain's office. As I look through the window, I see two khaki-clad students busily occupied in addressing white envelopes to all our customers. From the brown-paper parcels they then take the calendars, all neatly tied with College ribbon, and having a picture of the garden beneath, and one of these is put into each envelope. An hour or so later the student who is on postman duty speeds upon her bicycle to dispatch them. It is not, however, only the letters that go from the College that give work and teach orderliness and method. Others are delivered at the office door by the one-armed postman and contain orders for special flowers or vegetables, required either as gifts or to provide for the entertainment of a family party. Then, too, little neatly-written, unstamped notes are placed upon my desk. These contain messages of thanks for past months spent at work in the garden, and often the writers express a hope that

after the holidays, when they return to College, they may be able to help the general work more.

Such details may appear trivial to those who, in early schooldays, received careful training in good manners and whose attention was drawn to the fact that more than half the successes in life depend, not so much upon cleverness, as upon that deference and consideration for others that will often melt the hardest heart. Young women who are forced to leave their home surroundings early in life in order to train for a profession lose, in consequence, much experience that family life, with its daily pleasures but oft-recurring little rubs, teaches in the way of thoughtfulness for neighbours. Unless a Woman's College can in some measure compensate for this loss and can show how the small amenities of life are to be acquired and thought of, it will not turn out attractive women, although their knowledge of technical and practical work may be complete. It is, therefore, with the warm approval of our Captain, who is anxious to fill a sadly needed want of this age, that a spirit of united effort towards the attainment of all soft, gentle, feminine qualities, is strongly encouraged. Together with it goes active co-operation in the interests and prosperity of the market-garden.

Sometimes, as a train passes slowly along the valley below, I see a small white object waved from one of the railway carriage windows. This is a popular student departing for her holidays, and a group of coloured handkerchiefs in the garden return her salute, floating these ensigns in

the breeze until long after the train has disappeared from sight.

Thus the busy days pass by, and gradually the names upon our roster list become fewer as one by one they are erased, until only the six faithful ones remain who have decided to postpone their holidays until after Christmas. These are wanted to keep watch over the plants, for, like children in a nursery, they need constant care and vigilance.

Much shopping has to be done, and I am often surprised at the number of little neat, white packages, tied up with College ribbon, that I see emerging from the house. Upon inquiry, I am told, " Oh, the whole village is getting presents, for all the students' landladies must, of course, be thought of in return for the care they have bestowed upon their young lodgers."

It is upon the rounded slopes of the downs that most resemblance is to be found to our human ideas of the first peaceful Christmas, and even this exceptional year, so full of turmoil and grief, has not removed the likeness. As I look from a distance towards Mount Caburn a small speck of drab is noticeable slowly moving in ever-varying shape across the grey-green turf. To the rear of it is one dot of black, which moves forward, occasionally remains stationary, and then resumes a forward movement, as if accompanying the coloured speck. It is the shepherd with his sheep, and he is continually selecting the warm, sheltered bends and undulations of ground, so that his flock, the drab-coloured object, can graze in warmth. With him goes a shaggy-haired, grey-

and-white dog who studies each movement of his master, and from time to time gallops forward to direct the sheep one way or another.

The mediæval Christmas carol seems produced before our eyes!

> "The shepherd upon a hill he sat,
> He had on him his tabard and his hat,
> His tar-box, his pipe and his flaget;
> His name was called Jolly, Jolly Watt,
> For he was a good herd's boy."

As the sun slowly sinks in the midst of rose-coloured clouds and the light that glistens on the brooks of the valley darkens, we shall see again part of that wonderful story that we are told of in the carol. The shepherd, as of old, is in a long black cloak with many capes about his shoulders to protect him from the cold blasts of the hills. Will he not again put his hand to his hood as he sees a star as red as blood, and, summoning his dog to watch over the flock, will he not set forth to Bethlehem, there to proffer all his small possessions, his tar-box, pipe, scrip, and skirt, to the New-Born Babe? Surely, in spite of the terrors of war, the haunting dread that is in many hearts, there is yet some steadfast consolation to be found in the resemblance to this ancient story, still seen each winter in living reality upon our Sussex Downs. Even the ambitions of a restless, jealous nation have so far not disturbed the picture.

Also in the sleepy old-world country town, with its steep winding streets and lanes that all lead to that former stronghold, Lewes Castle, there is on Christmas Eve much that recalls the past.

Particularly is this so in war-time, for there are fewer lights than usual, and then so many soldiers walking about in couples or standing in groups talking and laughing or saluting their officers as they pass remind us of the Barons' Wars, when the town was a large fortress and soldiers defended the Castle.

There is but one modern note, and yet even that does not jar, for it is a picturesque one. A wide-open entrance leads into the long, narrow, brilliantly-illuminated gallery of the penny bazaar, gay with tinsel paper festoons and wreaths of many-coloured tissue. The young lady behind the counter tries to persuade a shy young soldier to buy something for his sweetheart. "Oh, the ladies won't any of them have anything to say to me," he remarks with a touch of sadness in his voice. I notice, however, that he speedily takes the advice of his tormentor, and doubtless the charming ornamental comb that he purchases will baffle the obstinacy of the lady of his choice.

Our village folk have all come to join in the bustle and animation. I meet them carrying baskets or fish-net bags in which to carry home their purchases. They can hardly pass each other in the narrow streets, so many are abroad to-night, not only on foot but also in odd-shaped, badly-hung carts and prehistoric gigs, that seem mostly too high for the poor horses who struggle on between the shafts.

Every one is in good spirits and merry jokes go round, for the labouring man and some of the farmers are amongst those few remaining people

who cannot often afford to take a half-holiday, and therefore put a true value upon any that they do have. Their wives take things more seriously, for besides having their arms full of parcels they lead tired, fretful children by the hand.

As I wend my way homeward I notice that a familiar bush of holly has a visitor hidden halfway up its stem, in amongst the prickly branches. It is a young ploughboy from the farm near by, who is cutting branch after branch from the centre of the tree and flinging them to the ground. He deplores the lack of berries on them and asks me if I have any good trees in my garden. No doubt he would readily pay a moonlight visit of inspection if there were a prospect of such a prize. I assure him that this year red berries are as scarce as mistletoe.

It is already dark as I steal round the house, laden with packages containing the last wants of a hungry household, for no further provisions will reach us until three days hence, when holidays are over. I have managed to secure just those little trifles that sometimes are forgotten by the tradesman when he calls, because this week he has the requirements of so many to satisfy. The half-pound of butter or the extra Canadian cheese are what should keep the housekeeper calm and prevent her anxious mind from worrying at a moment when all her attention has to be centred upon the turkey and plum pudding.

In the two offices I find figures clad in pale-blue coats, standing upon chairs to wreathe holly, ivy, and mistletoe round the pictures. Very gay it

will look on the morrow, when we meet to spend Christmas together, united in the wish to have a happy evening, casting dull care away for once in spite of belonging to different families and counties and having only been thrown haphazard together by Fate. Soon all the rooms are decorated, for some one is employed in each strewing red-berried holly upon the old oak and walnut furniture.

When all is in order and late at night a snug arm-chair induces peaceful, happy thoughts, I hear a shuffling sound of many feet without. The noise increases until at length it would seem that the little house is surrounded by people. Furtively I look out, to see if maybe the enemy has surprised us—Are we to be imprisoned by Germans? I am soon reassured by the notes of "Noel, Noel," which surely no foreign voice could sing in the essentially Sussex style of the village lads and lasses.

Even they have had to alter their time-honoured reasons for collecting money, and their leaders ask for extra liberality as the funds will go to the relief of wounded soldiers. This is no self-seeking nocturnal orchestra. The group of singers is made up of generous British hearts wishing to help their fellow-countrymen in the hour of need. When, the carols over, their clear voices ring out with "God Save Our Gracious King," and the spirals of song spread upward in the frosty air and are echoed back again off the high downs, I feel proud with them that we are English people. No bombardments of seaside towns, or bombs dropped here or there, will move us from a steady, un-

panicky, bull-dog determination to retain command of the sea.

Christmas Day dawns peaceful but frosty, a beautiful winter's day. Beyond the meetings of our little happy garden community in the church porch, before and after service, and during necessary garden work, it is uneventful, though full of quiet preparation for a gay evening. Time flies by when innumerable parcels have to be tied with red ribbon, bowls filled with sweetmeats, raisins, figs, and then the long, narrow oak table made ready for seven hungry gardeners besides myself.

Some touch of originality is necessary, and so this year, as our thoughts are with the soldiers, a miniature cannon with a baby Union Jack waving about it stands between the two small Christmas trees. Printed menus of a banquet suited to the Kaiser are provided for the guests, and very hot and uncomfortable some of the dishes sound ! We are, indeed, glad that what our English cook provides does not resemble them.

How, it may be questioned, shall we spend the evening when the last of the crackers have been pulled and when we move into the Carnation Parlour to sit by the log fire ? We all are enchanted with the originality of a game which has been sent us by our friend who is known by the mysterious name of " The West Wind." She often wafts inspiriting ideas across the turfy Downland to us. This time they come in the shape of a white casket, upon which, in the midst of wreaths of red and green, are the words " Peg's Garden." The small box recalls the jewel-case of many a

mediæval Italian lady, but it contains something more entertaining than even powder-puffs or enticing mirrors would be to the vainest of women.

Within, wrapped carefully in tissue-paper tied with ribbon, are wonderful little wooden models. And what do you think they represent ?

Each is a painted figure about six inches high and personifies one of the garden students. All are in their khaki uniforms, some with a favourite shape of hat or an emblem that alone may assist in making them recognisable to their fellow-workers. The artist—for the " West Wind " is a true one—has successfully depicted the characteristic of each, without any ungentle reminder of caricature, yet with such careful perception that each seems to be an unmistakable likeness.

There they stand upon the table, sixteen carved, wooden figures. One carries a trug filled with vegetables ; another, who usually has the office of arranging flower-vases, lifts a pink nosegay to her face ; a third wears black leggings and carries a note-book, consequently she can be no other than our Secretary. Some have spades, besoms, or garden forks in their hands, and always with each figure is some small distinction either of costume or gesture which the artist has cleverly seized upon.

Amazed and delighted, we crowd round to see these real works of art, resembling as they do, in the tender care which has been bestowed upon them, the carved and painted treasures of a chess-board. But who is this in the pale-blue coat, who is able to swing a big dinner-bell in her hand ?

The other figures are rigid and immovable. Surely this must be the Captain of the merry band!

Each of us, paper and pencil in hand, is asked to note the number written beneath every model and to record an opinion as to whom the figure is intended to represent. The winner of the most correct list receives a prize.

The game is an engrossing one, for while all are desirous of detecting their own characteristics, even more interesting are the peculiarities of their neighbours. Here, as shown by an accurate and kindly observer, are the little human weaknesses and the special accomplishments of all the garden colony. Two golden-haired ones, whom others do not hesitate in naming, are unable to recognise themselves. One figure wears a large hat, but the face below it is scarcely delineated! Can this be intentional, or did the artist suddenly feel unable to read this character? In vain we ask, At what moment of night or day has the West Wind been playing round Peg's Garden? How could we be unconscious that she was discovering the hearts that are in that garden? Those who appreciate the charm of a busy hive of workers all concentrating their energy upon one happy effort will know that it is not difficult to read hearts that are simple and childlike.

As the little figures are wrapped away again and put to sleep until another festival comes round, pleasant thoughts remain with each one of us. The artistic beauty of workmanship and colouring recalls the skill of bygone craftsmen who devoted leisure and infinite patience to a study of

their models and the execution of their work. Perhaps it is through transmission of the careful detail shown by Dürer and his pupils that Germans are so skilled in making lifelike toys. It is an industry to be encouraged, because well-made playthings that truly represent objects must educate the young to observe, and this is a help in after-life for all professions. Hitherto, we have relied entirely upon Germany for those childish decorations that adorn our Christmas trees, but the moment has come for us in England to start many such industries ourselves. With thought and observation we could surpass the toys that have been made and should thus gain, perhaps, somewhat of that independence and self-reliance, which, it must be confessed, as a nation, we lack.

At the present moment, it would seem desirable to interest small children in subjects that do not bear directly upon the war. They see and hear each day so much that relates to hand-grenade fighting, bomb-dropping, Zeppelin raids, all of which is unrestful, exciting, and unconsciously conducive to cruelty and hardness. Would it not be possible to appeal, by means of artistically executed, lifelike toys, to the love of natural objects and beautiful things, which exists most assuredly in each one of us but which is apt to be blotted out by too much attention being paid to horrors? Surely it is necessary to counteract with vigour the sensational talk about unpleasing current events which even the best-trained nurserymaid cannot resist indulging in before children. Will miniature farm-houses, thatched barns, hurdled

sheep-pens, painted cows with movable joints, wooden corduroy-clad labourers, and old-fashioned Mr. Noah, now converted into a typical John Bull farmer, not bring back to the child of to-day some love for country life? These objects, which are being created by our new English toy-makers, should help to restore that happy balance of combined interest in town and country which has for some time been unevenly maintained. Is it not possible that these subjects, rendered in an attractive way, will help to develop a genuine love of farming and country life in the three-year-old sons of our landowners? If so, a work of national training will have been commenced, one which will help revive that " back to the land " movement which is health-giving and steadying in this strenuous age of rush and unrest. Thus does it depend upon the women of England, those mothers of young children who have such a far-reaching field of work of Empire-building before them in the years which will follow the war, to learn themselves about the great treasures that for all time lie safely held by the land, but which have become too little appreciated or noticed as civilisation has increased and town life has absorbed the interest of the majority. If they learn to look seriously upon wooden toy farm-houses, their children will wish to play with them, and thus seed will be sown which will bear fruit of food production in time to come.

The importance of encouraging toy-making brings with it a consideration of the advantages that all similar industries offer to village communities.

Russia, Belgium, and Switzerland are examples of countries where the worker on the land pursues, as well, an industrial trade. This enables him and his family, not only to have wider interests, but to earn more money than they would do if they devoted themselves to the cultivation of the land alone. Dark winter evenings pass quickly when all the family is occupied with some trade like basket-making, box-making, etc. There is no doubt that manual work stimulates the imagination and so brings about a wider outlook upon general subjects. Another advantage is that, should a workman, through an accident, become disabled and unfit for hard physical exercise such as ploughing, digging, or trenching, he still will in all probability be able to continue industrial work, devoting all his time to it, and thus maintaining his family. In years to come, there will be many one-legged and one-armed men, heroes of the Great War, and it is for these especially, should they return to a country life, that these trades will be beneficial. So long as these remain village occupations, which can in many cases be pursued in the cottages without any fear of their developing into capitalist factories, the labourer and his family will benefit by them.

Thus, when my young friends leave me, to brave the ice-cold wind against their rosy, smiling faces as they return to their cottage homes, I find myself reflecting upon the close relationship that exists between the industries of prosperity and peace and the cruelty and hardship of war. We may not always be in a frame of mind calm enough

to perceive how closely both ideas are interwoven, and how often, out of the terrors of war, ensue blessings of peace. As this never-to-be-forgotten Christmas draws to an end, the opening scene of *Hamlet* seems especially appropriate, and let us hope that the two ideas that are there put into the mouth of the same speaker may be of good omen for the times that are before us. He says :

" Tell me, he that knows
Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land,
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon
And foreign mast for implements of war ;
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week ;
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint labourer with the day ?
Some say that ever 'gainst the season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long,
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad ;
The nights are wholesome ; then no planets strike,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time."

CHAPTER VI

WHAT WOMEN-GARDENERS ARE WANTED FOR

The New Year has come in an unkind, boisterous mood, echoing in a measure the sorrows and terrors that the Great War has brought with it. The Christmas hymn, speaking as it does of quiet and peace in the island of the Cyclades whence it was handed down to us, has not been realised for long:

"As when in the moon of midwinter
God fills fourteen days with His Grace,
And dwellers on earth call it the season wind-forgotten,
The holy birth-tide of the Glittering Kingfisher."

Only for a few days was there this lull, as if Nature in her moods were in sympathy with the hearts of men. We have been told of that astonishing respite from fighting, arranged for privately by the soldiers of the Allies and their enemies, when members of opposing forces met and talked between their respective trenches, joining together in song and voicing thus for once in unison a peace-offering for the holy season. After those few hours of quiet, the deafening din of battle and heavy fighting recommenced with renewed vigour, and together with it came violent

wind and rain to add to all the other fears and troubles of mankind.

Here the brooks have swelled to glistening lakes which extend over many fields, and, where some portion of a grass meadow is yet left exposed, white seagulls congregate to see what food they can find. Apple orchards are under water and in places only the upper portions of bridges and wooden gates remain visible, standing meaningless, with tiny waves of water flowing towards them. Those only who, like ourselves, are on high ground can retain a firm foothold or any means of carrying on outdoor garden work.

During those times of terrific, fleet-sweeping squalls, when all day long the anger of the storm grew and grew in strength, until for two whole hours after dusk we wondered whether chimneys, windows, roofs, trees, greenhouses could possibly hold out against its fury, the women-gardeners remained undaunted. Their khaki coats and skirts are hidden beneath thick oilskin coats, buttoned up high round the neck, so that only a small face can be seen above, and only boys' boots and neat leggings below the coat. As caps they wear seamen's sou'-westers, also of oilskin, which come down well over neck and shoulders behind and, being tied under the chin with black ribbon, remain securely on the head in any gale of wind. All dressed alike in this neat and very becoming businesslike uniform, they are ready for any emergency, and usually their utter disregard of rain surprises the men experts who come to give them practical instruction.

I am sometimes secretly amused in watching a dispirited instructor, his cloth overcoat shining with rain, which, judging by a white and rather pinched-looking face, is rapidly penetrating his other clothes. In vain he seeks a reasonable excuse for leaving the work he is engaged upon, suggesting another important job which all could join in, beneath the protecting roof of a greenhouse. With every imaginable question that feminine ingenuity can evolve, the intolerant oilskins, in other words, students, detain him out of doors, and particularly is this so if there are roses to be tied or some other necessary operation to be done in one of the special ornamental gardens which belong to individual students. In that case, there is no hope of escape for him, and his best chance is to join wholeheartedly in similar enthusiasm for work.

This callousness about bad weather, coupled with genuine love of work, has a most inspiriting effect upon the garden labourer. He is afraid to take refuge in the carpenter's shed, where lies concealed that ready excuse and never-failing boon of wet weather, " the wheelbarrow with the broken handle that must be mended." If ladies are able and willing to brave storms, he too soon finds it advisable to become indifferent to them and, having procured an inexpensive black coat like theirs, is spared all growls from rheumatism. Moreover, when everybody is working for a united cause the individual soon becomes forgetful of small personal discomforts in his desire to hasten on the general work.

In gardens near the coast it is impossible to con-

sider bad weather, because sunshine and rain alternate quickly in a single day, and April weather seems to show itself all the year round. One storm in particular, after Christmas, caused such havoc throughout the countryside that not only were big trees uprooted, but a large piece of a hedge was blown, root and all, into the middle of a road. The garden is but slowly recovering from the damage that was done, and some days have been spent in mending many of the older portions of pergolas and trellis-work, that, through age, had become enfeebled, and consequently could not bear up against the fast-speeding wind. Shrubs and plants half-dragged from the ground have been stamped in again and now resume an upright position trying in vain to look as if nothing unusual had occurred. One poor little sweet-scented verbena is no more. Brave little thing, it had stood the buffetings of many storms, but this last one proved too much for it, in spite of canvas screens and pea-boughs that were put round as a protection. With some trepidation, when the gale abates, we pay visits of sympathy to many such garden friends, but usually a little raised band of straw, with which the lower portion of their stems is bound loosely round in early winter, and a protecting mulch of manure, preserve them from shocks of sudden cold. *Romneya Coulteri*, the myrtle, and our much-loved passion-flower are none the worse, and it is whilst ascertaining this that I make two discoveries, always refreshingly new and yet connected enduringly with the early days of the year. The sweet-smelling, baby flower

of *Lonicera fragrantissima* is out, showing creamy-white against one of the pale-blue, wooden pillars that support a roofed-in garden. All these are plants which we in the south are fortunate in possessing, and which friends who come from the Midlands cast envious glances at, for they can only grow them under forced conditions or in cold greenhouses. Then, too, springing out of the grass lawn the Fair Maids of February are all standing waiting to be looked at in their usual home beneath a row of dark-green Irish yews that outlines the house terrace. The German name of *Schneeglöckchen* is descriptive and full of that love for childish fancies which we once connected so intimately with the German mind but shall never connect with it again. The old-fashioned English name for them is most pleasing, and precocious warmth that succeeds the storms shows them early heralds of spring days.

Knowing well the peculiarities of local climate, for these lessons have been learnt in previous years and are not easily forgotten, we are able when storms come to protect the garden from excessive damage. We have, for instance, an invention for preventing the best pergolas from being razed to the ground. The garden lights are held down by having thick cords stretched across them, and these are tied round heavy sticks or cumbersome stones which rest heavily near the sides of the frames, thus making it impossible for the wind to get in under the woodwork and lift the lights. Our big Italian orange pots used formerly to fall over with a crash, owing to the strength of the gale

beating against the round, clipped bay trees that are planted in them. Now we are safe from this anxiety, because four neat pale-blue painted stakes, each with a pointed end fixed in the ground, firmly hold them as in a vice. There is an oblong, flat trellis roof which rests upon very tall square blue uprights, and this the children who play in my garden always call the " bird-cage," for, indeed, in shape it does resemble one. Within the trellis-work, sunk level with the red-tiled floor, there is a large tank in and out of which flit the birds to take surreptitious sips of water, or to clean and plume their feathers ; hence this name is a good one for the arbour. The tank is fed by rain-water from the house-roofs, and the gardeners find it a useful little pool in which to dip their cans ; so no wonder they and the birds welcome the shade of the cage in summer, when fragrant scent from Madonna lilies in the beds, within, is wafted through it by the summer breeze. On autumn nights whilst storms rage I often wonder as I sit snugly ensconced indoors if the little tits that hide within its shelter are safe. By firmly securing the square-mesh trellis to the uprights and winding stout wire round all, by placing heavy wooden beams upon the roof to weigh it down, this lightly constructed shadow-house has so far remained intact and two arched entrances that admit to it make restful picture frames for distant views of the Weald. It is so helpful in a rather young and very open garden occasionally to form artificial breaks, for nothing is more wearisome than to wander through grounds where no surprises occur and all is stretched

out maplike before the visitor without dividing hedges or breaks and devoid of the unexpected or the mysterious.

The new year has brought encouragement with regard to the future prospects of women-gardeners, for there has been decided recognition of their worth in the opinion of practical men-gardeners and the Royal Horticultural Society has at length shown its approval by admitting women as well as men to the competition for a Degree in Horticulture. Several times, of late, the Principal of the College has been told by a capable and well-qualified gardener, "We want you ladies now; we most fully realise this." It is not only the war and consequent shortage of men that has brought about this change. The reason is, that a type of practical, energetic, fully competent woman has come more to the fore, and this men quickly appreciate. No longer does the amateurish, helpless lady join the profession, for no School or College that respects itself cares to admit her. She cannot be a credit to her teachers, and in all honesty they will be unable to recommend her for a good post, so that it is wrong to encourage her to think that she will be successful if she takes a course of instruction.

There is another kind of student who will never make a good professional gardener. Doctors at first sent us semi-invalids recovering from some illness, hoping that their patients would thus regain an interest in life by watching garden operations, but at length they have learnt that College life is unsuitable for these ladies. Such cases can only

be dealt with in Nursing Homes, where a moderate amount of garden work is considered part of the cure but is not carried out with any seriousness or with the intention of its being later adopted as a means of livelihood.

Then the somewhat rough-mannered, undisciplined middle-class woman who in early days emerged as gardener from some of the training centres is also now in a minority. How it was ever thought that fragile, tender little plants would thrive if some one of this description watched over them, I cannot conceive. A similar idea took root with regard to the selection of men suited to care for dumb animals, for the roughest and least well-educated often abound in stables and are assistants to the veterinary surgeon ; yet common sense, one would think, should quickly prove that where the object to be cared for is helpless, as is a plant or animal, excessive gentleness of touch, patience, and observation are necessary.

Certainly, this type of woman-gardener should never have been tolerated ; she has done more harm to the calling than can perhaps be realised by any excepting those who have lived for a while in an educational gardening atmosphere. Her untidy general appearance, disorder of clothes, unkempt hair, unbusiness-like habits, and bad manners have caused her employer many a mental shudder. Soon, let us hope, she will be a thing of the past, completely forgotten and never to rise up again.

Sometimes too we hear of maidservants who have grown tired of household duties and would welcome a change to outdoor life. They are,

however, totally unsuited to the gardener's profession, although in some cases they might adapt themselves to light work on a farm. I should like to take this opportunity of saying how much opposed I am to their admission to Horticultural Colleges with a view to future garden work, because what we wish to do, above all, is to improve and heighten the standard of scientific, thoughtful gardening in this country. We want to banish once and for all the inferior, rule-of-thumb, slow-thinking, inartistic man-gardener whom we have tolerated for so long and in his place require intelligent, educated ladies, who will direct and supervise as ably and in some cases even better than the very best type of male gardener, the man who is to be found in our largest English private gardens, capable of directing from ten to twenty under-gardeners, well read and acquainted with science. There will always be a need everywhere for the labourer whose muscular arm does all manual work such as trenching, digging, and hoeing. It is only during war time that we struggle to manage without him, but when peace returns and rural industries in so many countries have to be revived and built up again, in some cases from the commencement, we shall welcome, not alone the ex-soldier or working man, but we shall require too many educated, thinking men and women to live on the land and increase its intensive, productive powers.

In looking towards the future, therefore, I see indeed a vast outlook of work and happiness for educated women, the daughters of professional

THE RIGHT KIND OF WOMEN-GARDENERS.

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men, but for the maidservant or secondary-school girl it would seem that farm and not garden life holds out far more suitable prospects; milking cows, poultry-keeping, dairy work, jam-making, bee-keeping, these are all industries which she is fitted for and can carry on in company with the farmer's wife, who will watch over her moral welfare. In the homely surroundings of a farm-house she will feel at her ease, whereas in a private garden, even if she worked with other women, the men under-gardeners, who must, of necessity, be employed too for hard work, would not welcome in their profession young women of their own sphere of life. They would resent the co-operation of one of their women friends although they would gladly allow a lady to direct their work. Then, again, the accommodation of women in the bothy is another difficulty and unless some special housing arrangement can be made in a neighbouring village, the position is one which is fraught with trouble. It would seem therefore that in the interests of their future careers, even in the case of a head gardener's daughter who could live in her own home and work in the garden, it is not advisable to encourage any but educated ladies to become gardeners. Ultimate success depends upon higher education and qualities of directorship which do not come easily to maidservants.

New careers for women always commence by enlisting these unsuitable recruits and it is only after years of patient plodding towards an attainment of the right type of worker that the pioneers, who start such openings, are at length partially

rewarded for the uphill task they have had to perform. Unbelief, dark and impenetrable as the primeval forest, has first to be cleared; especially formidable is this obstacle where "the land" is connected with a future profession for "women." It would seem that the fact of coupling these two subjects together is sufficient to dull any public sympathy with either, and thus it becomes even harder to obtain the right type of workers. Many more years go by before a sufficient number are trained and successfully launched out into posts and then at length, when these have done work well and satisfied their employers, there comes a sudden and urgent demand for more.

This request for women-gardeners was very perceptible a year or two before the war began, but by the commencement of 1915 it became imperative and general. Owners of large private gardens, who, until then, had maintained that men-gardeners alone could do the work and that women were all right as companion gardeners or to do jobbing gardening in seaside towns, but altogether impossible to consider for the supervision of large places, now quickly altered their opinion. The reaction had come at last and was almost laughable in its suddenness and haste. Moreover, the varied talents that were asked for struck one as difficult to satisfy, for women-gardeners were not only expected to understand orchids, fruit under glass, and stove plants, but were also asked to be chauffeur-gardeners, to work the electric light engine when not gardening, and mind the children's pony or feed the pigs. This sudden popularity was perceptible even in so

trivial a matter as the post-bags delivered to the College, for they became exceptionally heavy ones. The postman remarked with a puzzled air and a slight tone of annoyance, as if it were an exception to recognised routine, that " they seemed heavier even than at Christmas." The white fox terrier " Timothy," too, has been put off his punctual habit of attendance at the back door when letters come, because they have been much later than usual in arriving. His masterly growl and snarling teeth have therefore not been shown to the apparently over-presuming official who knocks so violently at the back door.

Besides many hundred appointments that were offered by letter and telegram to our past and present students, there came innumerable letters in answer to one which I wrote to the *Daily Mail*. As my appeal was made with a view to showing ladies what useful national work they could do at this moment towards helping their country, the ready response contained in some 300 letters was encouraging. The following is what I wrote and I insert it here because the need will remain for many years and should be made as widely known as possible.

January 1, 1915.

Dear Sir,

I am desirous, through your columns, to appeal to the patriotism of ladies who wish to be of use to their country—not only now, in the crisis through which we are passing, but permanently, even when peace is restored.

We want in England more well-trained, educated, foreseeing people as gardeners. Each week this fact is brought home to the Principal of the College of Gardening at Glynde, which I founded some twelve years ago.

I often wish we could enlist for this profession the services of active ladies, accustomed to out-of-door, country lives, preferably the daughters of Army or Navy officers. The life is a happy one and the profession is remunerative. Why do they hold back from it? The two years' training is no harder than that of other workers and there are ever-widening prospects developing for the trained, experienced gardener.

We often have the offer of a comfortable cottage, large enough for three or four ladies, who would receive coals, milk, vegetables, and salaries ranging from 18*s.* to 30*s.* per week, according to experience. In many cases the ladies would be given entire control of a large kitchen garden and, provided they supplied the owner with his household wants, would have a free hand as regards the disposal of the remainder of the fruit and vegetables. The following letter is typical of what we are asked.

"THE GARDENS,
"—— CASTLE.
"*December* 30, 1914.

"DEAR SIR (OR MADAM),

"As the garden staff here is sadly depleted owing to the war, I was wondering, if I suggest placing lady gardeners in the bothy, if they could be had from your College, and I would like to know particulars as to wages expected (we paid the

journeymen 18*s*.). Also what work they would be capable of doing out and under glass. Of course, nothing may come of my suggestion, but before I mention it to my chief, I should like to have a few particulars as to lady-gardeners' capabilities.

" Thanking you in anticipation,

" Yours faithfully,

" ——.

" We might require six or eight."

I feel sure that it is only necessary to make known the fact that many of the gardens of England are in want of " hands " and to insist that a large and well-grown food supply, so essential to the health of a people, can only be kept up by having well-trained workers, and we shall have plenty of ladies as recruits for the gardening profession. They will be happy in offering their services, because they will not only be advancing their own prospects, but helping our country.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

WOLSELEY.

The answers that were received to this appeal for patriotism in Englishwomen have shown how willing all are to serve their country. Not only middle-aged women, whose sons are fighting at the front, but also young girls of fifteen, readily encouraged by their parents, wish to hear more about the profession, and if one may judge by the ardour shown there should be no great difficulty in supply-

ing journeymen to the poor forsaken gardens of England.

One obstacle has, however, been very evident, and as it is one which arises in connection with all women's work, I think it advisable to lay stress upon it. Amongst 300 ladies who inquired about gardening upon this occasion, only some twenty were able to afford the expenses of training. The matter is a serious one and shows very plainly why women, up to now, have been so crippled and impeded in pushing forward into public careers. How is it possible to become proficient without devoting sufficient time and money to a study? I believe that in some foreign countries such as Denmark and Holland women are given liberal education which enables them later to do justice to their calling, but in England we are slow at introducing new ideas and it has always been considered all-important to educate a son by means of an expensive training, but daughters have been left to manage as best they could. Probably the upheaval of all past ideas, as well as the diminished incomes which we have to prepare ourselves to face in years to come, will result in women being forced from their earliest years to train themselves for a career in the same efficient way that men have always prepared themselves for a profession.

Often, in time of peace, we are asked to recommend a lady-gardener who could spend some days each week, or perhaps go for six weeks at a time, to stay as a friend with a single lady who is interested in gardening but needs guidance as to the correct way of carrying out certain operations. It

would be nice, the employer thinks, to have some one as a companion to share the same interests and help to make the little garden pretty and gay. The obstinate character and the slow comprehension of Trowell, a jobbing man-gardener, are fast converting the peaceful garden into a scene of perpetual strife and argument. This is distressing to the owner, maybe a past lover of fox-hunting, who, through lack of nerve or diminished means, has been forced to take up gardening in the place of this other and more youthful interest. I well remember one such lady who asked for an interview. She was alert, nice-looking, and wore a smart, practical tweed coat and skirt. Her boots, well-made and highly-polished, would alone have stamped her as a hunting woman, had not her delightful ease of manner and quick way of coming to the point in speech also betrayed it. She told me that she had reluctantly been obliged to give up hunting, because she found that instead of joining in the first flight, as formerly, she now experienced a decided feeling of relief if there were a gate through which she could ride and thus miss some of the jumping. In order to avoid seeing the meets of hounds, which only enhanced her regret at not taking part in them, she spent the winter in London, going to her small country place only in summer. She required a friendly young gardener who could watch over plants in her absence, and teach her in the long summer days to care for them. "I want a new interest. Can she give it to me?" she asked, putting it all in a nutshell.

I suggested that we should go and look at my

young women, who were at work in the frame ground. It was wonderful how, by watching them, she seemed to gauge not only each one's ability as a gardener but also her character. After a few moments of quiet observation she said without hesitation, " That is the one I should like to speak to, please." When, some brief questionings over, the student, unconscious of the pleasant future that was being decided for her, moved away, the lady said in an undertone, " She will suit me down to the ground. How soon may I have her ? " It was all settled very much in the way that a good hunter is selected, after he has been successfully put through his paces.

We welcome these small posts (they might almost be called friendly ones) because they pave the way towards the attainment of wider experience, and a year or two thus spent enables a gardener to become head in a large garden where she plans rotations, orders seeds, does expert pruning, thinning, and tying, and in short supervises the working man and does all the thinking and foreseeing.

It is not, however, only in private posts that I hope to see more women-gardeners before many years have passed. The ideal arrangement for those who have a small amount of capital to spend would be to group themselves in friendly bands, whereby several would live under one roof, each pursuing her own special hobby, but all united in the one endeavour to make more profit out of the land. Co-operation could be extended by having numerous groups of ladies living in the same

neighbourhood. By this means, expenses would be minimised, because requisites and manure would be purchased in large quantities and then divided. Likewise, the produce of all the small colonies could be bulked on the railway, and a reduction in cost would ensue, similar to what we see so admirably carried out in other countries.

Some of the ladies would find advisory work remunerative, for help is needed in small and large gardens. How often the owner is puzzled as to whether the pruning of fruit trees or roses has been correctly done! but if he engaged an advisory expert his uneasiness would end; for she would either give the proper directions for pruning and see them carried out or would do it herself.

Similarly the plan-drawer or garden designer would find many people who welcome a colour-scheme herbaceous border, where successions of lovely flowers keep up an unfailing display from April till November. She could submit a plan on paper and if it were approved could superintend the planting, so as to have broad irregular groups of pale blues and yellows carrying the eye past an infinitesimal touch of white to stronger, larger masses of reds and bright yellow.

One of this party of friends, the so-called Housekeeper, would have her hands busily occupied during the fruit season, picking, storing, and utilising apples, pears, and small fruits and preserving any that there would be a sale for. If a larger business could be opened out, then vegetable-bottling might be undertaken.

In contemplating this very ideal existence for

those who love country life, I have in mind the successful example of such a growers' colony as is to be seen at Pershore. There, in close proximity, are men and women, all pursuing the same large interests. Although their work is primarily for individual advancement or pleasure, it yet has the advantage of being useful to our country and Empire. They are increasing the cultivation of land and the yield of home-grown food supplies. Their work does not, however, cease here, for the active industry that they maintain brings with it an added demand for labour, and thus the workman, his wife and children are retained on the land. Better housing conditions and regular employment keep him from seeking other work in towns or in our Colonies and this helps to stem the Rural Exodus which, for several hundred years, has increased and consequently weakened the nation. We know the health-giving, nerve-steadying influence of country life and in this age of air-craft and bombardment it is especially necessary to build up for future generations some of those strong physical and moral qualities that must surely suffer through the strain they will have been put to during these months of warfare.

The women that are wanted at once, to prepare themselves for this great work, are those who in their childhood have lived in the country and have had gardens. If, too, they have been accustomed to play games with their brothers, to saddle their own ponies and to act as beaters out shooting, they will be all the better adapted to this new life. As will be seen in the course of these chapters, there

is no hardship in a gardener's profession other than that of rough weather, but on the other hand great happiness is obtainable by the freedom from all artificial surroundings, the fact of getting back to the very root of things which comes from close contact with Nature, by early hours and an open-air occupation.

It may be suggested that this sort of life is monotonous and self-centred, that its social attractions are limited because these ladies would not be able to meet and exchange ideas with men of their own social standing. It is, however, the opinion of many that when this war is ended all the present conditions of life will be altered, greatly simplified and improved. Although it is impossible to foretell with certainty what will happen, it appears likely that many men will take up agriculture, fruit-growing, forestry, and market-gardening as professions.

Thus would the countryside return to its original, happy state, much as it existed in Tudor days, when the sons and daughters of gentlemen worked by the side of the cottager and all were united in their co-operative interest of increasing the yield of the soil in each manor or community. This happiness in work would bring back forcibly to us those rare riches of calm and steadfastness that only the land can hold, riches of which we have been apt to lose sight with the invasion of the week-end visitor and those who treat country life much as a plaything, to be taken up for a time and then cast aside, because the glitter and sparkle of town life seem more attractive.

CHAPTER VII

WORK UNDER GLASS

In those very vivid and true representations of the Bayeux Tapestry, to which Mr. Hilaire Belloc has recently written notes, we find much the same colouring as in many a real present-day winter scene. The colours used in this ancient needlework are quite as impressive as the actual design. They consist chiefly of a clear pale blue, mauve with a touch of blue in it, golden green and rosy mauve ; but all these shades are so skilfully interspersed over the whole, so evenly balanced that they form absolutely restful pictures. Attention is thus guided away from the drawing, which, owing to a lack of knowledge in perspective, is in places somewhat quaint and childishly incorrect, and our admiration remains centred round the artistic delicacy of colouring. Very little written information accompanies the pictures, and only by looking for a bright emerald-green figure, which usually denotes an important actor in the story, or by a few Latin words can we glean any exact information as to the meaning of the scenes. It is in the wide border which surrounds the tapestry that there is indication of the time of year when the chief events took place, for these are shown in a

marked way by the work upon which the husbandman is employed. For instance, in one part we see a man bending as he steers the plough, whilst another, with a long pole in his hands, belabours the poor beast that drags it ; further on, a sower scatters seed over the land, and again another scene represents a man leading a horse with a harrow harnessed to it ; thus can we guess approximately the month when these operations took place.

It is by Nature's landmarks, often like those of the tapestry transiently indicated, that a gardener's life is marked out. Each month, in some cases each fortnight of work in a garden has a feature that stamps it specially, so that, without calendar or trivial human note, it is recognisable. Perhaps the beginning of the year is one of the most striking instances of this, for towards the middle of January the day's work commences by moonlight.

I have often thought this must be an inspiring time for young students as they walk up early to the garden and look out over the wide valley to the great sweep of Downland which stands out prominent and dark blue against the light of the sky. Parts of the green marshland glitter still, where the light of the moon lingers upon brooks and small lakes that heavy rains have lately swelled, whilst high in the sky, immediately above the long, wide grass walk that goes through the centre of our land, is a beautiful, slender, sickle-shaped moon. Not far from it one very large bright star still gleams, and it is only as a red flush deepens in the sky above the tall hill beacon opposite that these two slowly pale and gradually disappear from view.

It would seem almost as if this golden sickle were a happy portent of the harvest we hope to reap when winter work is done, and the star some guiding influence placed above, in watchful care for the young lives that are making this place the first halting-ground in their gardening careers.

As the rose tint in the eastern sky deepens and the long line of hill slowly loses the dark-blue colour and assumes its natural paler tint, figures begin to move about their work, for the warmth-giving, life-giving sun has risen again. It is still holiday time, but, unlike some large Institutions where all the students leave upon a given date and work is then attended to only by an indifferent official, we always retain six students at least in order that plants should not suffer from neglect. These specially selected workers, too, gain in this way exceptional experience which helps them to obtain more speedily responsible posts. One of the most important rules is that nothing shall hinder the proper treatment of flowers and vegetables, because their successful culture is in itself good testimony of what women-gardeners can achieve ; the garden therefore is never left unattended, even for a day, as one small band of students succeeds the other until all have had their holidays.

Although there is not much to watch in the growth of outdoor plants, there are signs in some of the deep warm country lanes that life is stirring. The distant landscape always looks so much larger in winter and now more than ever does it recall those soft colours of the old needlecraft. All leaves have been blown from hedge and tree, conse-

quently sheds, ricks, farm buildings, houses, that we were unconscious of in summer when dense green clothing hid so much, are now laid bare. It would seem that varied colouring and incident try to compensate for the absence of the glowing autumn foliage that has been swept away.

The house stands upon the highest portion of an evenly arched hill, and close behind it is a narrow country road which descends somewhat abruptly on both sides to sheltered dells. Once upon a time it was the main way from Lewes to the old country inn at Glynde, but long ago a wide high road, suitable for motors and other traffic, was made some distance off, and now this little winding lane is the undisturbed, peaceful retreat of nightingales and other birds, who know that the quiet country people who walk along it will leave them unmolested. The way has been worn down by pack-horses and travellers who used it for many centuries, so that high protecting banks rise upon either side and only the sun can force an entrance or perhaps too at times the south-west wind. These are the places to look for the first fresh green leaves as they burst open their little protecting brown shields that have guarded them until now from wintry blasts. It may be only a step or two at the bottom of the hill in the moist ground, where a long, low-roofed, thatched cottage stands near the bend of the road and gives additional shelter, or perhaps it is in that warm corner where the earliest may-bush blossoms. These are places where the first tiny honeysuckle leaves are found.

There was a time, before the greenhouses and

frames were in existence, when these small delightful surprises outside the garden were the only ones we had. Now, however, the first days of the year bring many treats and luxuries.

How tempting is a dish of forced asparagus eaten in January! It is not much to look at, only a few slender, very pale, anæmic-looking grasses, but the delicacy—refinement, one might almost say—of flavour surpasses that of the kind eaten in April. It leaves a recollection of spring behind, a waft of remembrance similar to what the favourite scent of a flower recalls in pleasant recollection. Then, there is that pale-rose-coloured rhubarb, very sweet and soft, which, like the asparagus, comes from the rich storehouse of mystery behind a thick Hessian canvas covering in the large greenhouse. Hidden away thus in darkness, beneath the staging, a casual visitor might pass by and easily overlook the home from which these delicacies emerge.

When first I came to live here, I was puzzled how best to treat the lie of the ground below the house and how to connect it with the central grass walk and borders that were to be the important features of the garden. In a previous chapter I have endeavoured to show that the house stands upon a small plateau, where irregularly shaped paving-stones form a walk right round the building. Opposite the central window some steps, made of old disused railway sleepers, somewhat disguised by dwarf spring flowers that nestle between them, lead down the chalk bank, which was the debris of the builders' excavations, to what is now a grass terrace below. This was the piece of ground that

at first, before it had been levelled, made the house appear to be insecurely built, for it was considerably lower on one side than on the other and consequently gave the building a lop-sided appearance.

The only way of remedying this defect was by making the slope into a level terrace, wide and important enough to draw the eye away from any disturbing lines beyond. I marked out the exact limits and found that, in order to make it wider than the platform upon which the little house stood, it would have to be fifty-two feet by twenty-two. The next question to be considered was whence to obtain the large amount of material in the shape of chalk and mould that would be required to carry out this work. It is always a satisfaction to feel that one garden operation will help towards the fulfilment of another undertaking and so I considered where I could best obtain what was required and at the same time prepare a site for a future greenhouse. Not far away, on the south-west side, was a hard piece of chalk land, useless because its steep slope let all the rain run off it and, as there were only a few inches of poor soil upon its surface, no plants would thrive. The chalk from this, if carted to the right position, would answer my purpose well and have the double advantage of leaving, where it was taken from, a square, hard foundation of rock, protected on the north side, which should in the future be an ideal site for forcing things under glass.

The only difficulty was moving this mass of chalk, and we overcame it in this way. I was fortunate in obtaining the help of several lime-pit

workers who, having been shown the size of ground they had to fill in, built up, with their usual skill, a wall of turfs to form the outskirts of it. By placing these layers of turfs, grass side downwards, a good solid retaining wall is made, for grass soon grows and moulds them into an immovable mass. When a portion of this wall had been built up, the next thing was to find a suitable light cart in which to convey the chalk, for although the distance between the two places was not great, there were several stiff little mounds to drag it over, and a heavy farm cart was too unwieldy. By a happy inspiration, I remembered that the village sexton had a small tip-cart. He readily consented to bring it and his stout, red-haired pony to our help. They spent many days with us, and I wonder how often Sally crossed and recrossed the impeding mounds of earth, for she could not drag very much at a time, and so it was a case of little and often. At the end of each week, it was pleasant to think that work ceases at four on a Saturday and there would follow many hours of silent meditation, alternating with deliberate munching, which is a pony's way of enjoying Sabbath rest.

When the ground had been given sufficient time to settle, some good soil, to the depth of several inches, was placed all over it, and in the early spring, grass seed was sown. As the hill-side garden here reminds us of Italy, we outlined the terrace with dark Irish yews, because the colour of their foliage is in a measure like the depth of green of the Italian cypress. A further improvement was made in building a dry wall of brown

sandstone against the bank below the yews, and here all sorts of little Alpines bask in the sunshine, well sheltered from wind in the stone pockets that have been arranged for their comfort.

It was several years before we could spare time to utilise the frame ground that the little red pony had helped so much in preparing. At length, when more important work was finished, it seemed that the moment had arrived for building a really practical market-house, where students could complete their experience ; and so, the hundred or more chrysanthemums in their pots, that had usually found a summer and autumn home on this site, were removed further west, and we abandoned ourselves to the misery of having workmen for some weeks, busily erecting the structure that we are now very proud of.

With some hesitation I gave the order for building to commence, for I knew well the difficulties that were ahead of us. To arrange work so that each student can, for some weeks or months, be given absolute responsibility in ventilating houses and watering plants means that the head organiser requires many qualities in addition to the actual knowledge of growing plants. Patience is one of them, for through ignorance or carelessness crops suffer, and this is more often the case with work under glass than in outdoor gardening.

How often, in the early morning, after the Captain has done her round of inspection, do I hear the tolling of the great Garden Bell ! I know then that some act of negligence has caused the death of one or more plants and that consequently

students are summoned, not to a burial, but to attendance whilst reproof is administered for this lack of care. The instant the first peal rings out, all drop their tools and hurriedly, breathlessly come running up the hill to the students' office. If the offence is one of gross carelessness and means the loss of a considerable sum, a fine is levied and all subscribe to it. Perhaps freesia bulbs, that were placed on a warm shelf, so that they should get thoroughly dry, have had water spilled over them by mistake and will consequently become rotten, or else melon plants, that were to grow into finely developed bearers of good fruit, have been allowed to get bone-dry so that red spider has shown itself on their leaves. All such acts of indifference or forgetfulness, where they affect the welfare of plants, must be punished, and the only thorough way of doing so is by making each member of the community feel individually affected by the mischief that has been done. Upon rare occasions, when it is difficult to bring home sufficiently a sense of due penitence, the Captain has recourse to extreme measures. In single file the students follow her through the golden bushes of broom over the narrow drawbridge on to the roof-garden. On that flat expanse with its small surrounding wall, amidst circles and squares of flowers where tubs and pottery oil-jars gay with fuchsias and geraniums stand in patterns after the Italian fashion, the young gardeners surround their leader, looking like children awaiting the reproof of a parent. An appeal is then made to their sense of duty ; in moving words they are told that, since

the men away in the trenches are doing unselfish acts, the least they can do, to be worthy of them, is to fulfil the various offices in tending the plants that are given into their charge.

New resolves are then made, often tears are brushed away, and with a salute from all to the ensign which flies from a flagstaff on the roof garden, this touching little ceremony comes to an end and we hope that for some days the plants in the houses feel satisfied with the extra attention that is paid them.

With us, even when peace reigns and our staff is complete, the students still do all greenhouse work. Watering, potting, stoking, ventilating, everything rests with them, and a roster is arranged by which the most painstaking student is put in charge of certain houses, whilst others, perhaps beginners, have a short apprenticeship under her. The tedious part for the instructors is that no sooner has a head student thoroughly mastered the treatment required for certain plants than it becomes necessary, in order to give all a chance of learning, to promote another to take her place. Unless very exact and carefully-worded instructions are given out, plants are apt to suffer during this change of " hands." Those who have had to deal with the difficulties of teaching a new nursery-maid will fully sympathise with all that has to be overcome in a gardening school in order to safeguard plants.

A few of the notices that are posted up in the students' office show plainly that, under the right kind of jurisdiction, plants have to be handled as tenderly as children.

Here is one that may be of general interest :

" No student to work in or enter houses in wet garments.

" Put your oilskins on the ground near the door, and take off your hats.

" No student to bang the greenhouse doors, or to shout loudly whilst working. Plants, especially cyclamen, tomatoes, fuchsias, and, in a lesser degree, carnations, do not like noise. It shocks their system and retards growth."

It has been brought home to me repeatedly that Miss More is right in issuing these orders, for the clean, bright, and thoroughly happy appearance of plants and flowers that have been under her care is a great contrast to the half-starved, diseased, unclean ones that are often to be seen in gardens where much money is expended upon them and the results should reach perfection, but, alas, are merely proof of inattention.

Let us respect orders, and very silently and gently push the handle of the market-house door to see what the dullest days of the year can show under glass. The building measures forty-three feet in length by twenty feet in width, but is partitioned off and forms two houses with an arrangement by which the temperature of each can be separately regulated. The pipes run high overhead as well as beneath the staging, which is the most satisfactory way of heating houses, because warmth is thus more evenly distributed throughout the interior. Wooden shelves are suspended just above the highest pipes, and plants that stand on these benefit from the extra heat which thus rises

to them. Outside, facing due south, are brick walls for glass lights to rest on heated by other pipes.

Economy of space is perhaps what will strike the visitor most, for the garden has to be run upon strictly commercial lines, and therefore what we have under glass is not for show or mere ornament, but is grown solely with a view to supplying the wants of private customers, whose likes and dislikes must therefore regulate our choice. Another point that we adhere to is that all plants of the same kind are grouped together. This renders it easier to attend to watering and improves the appearance of a house, making it more restful to the eye, a result which the old-fashioned "spot and dot" system of colour and variety does not achieve. For instance, a number of pots of scarlet geraniums, which furnish useful cut flowers in winter, look well together, and not far from them, in the centre of the building, is a splendid bank of white arums in full bloom. Behind these tall plants, and consequently well away from the geraniums, with which they might clash in colour, are cyclamen of many varieties, of which the tender rose-coloured one is our favourite. Not far off are large-flowered, creamy white freesias, neatly staked, with that delicate, fragrant scent rising from them that recalls warm countries and sunshine.

A small propagator, filled with sand, contains carnation cuttings of many sorts, and beneath the staging, hidden behind boards or sacks, are rhubarb, sea-kale, asparagus, and pots of lily of the valley, the latter in its earliest state when only a pale leaf is pushing through.

Then, getting ready for the vegetable customers, are boxes full of mint, whilst recently-sown onions and leeks have still brown paper spread over them to deaden any too speedy glare of light. Tomatoes also are rapidly growing foliage. As visitors go round these two houses, I sometimes detect a look of hesitation on their faces, a passing doubt as to whether the pathway is wide enough to allow them to walk without brushing plants off the corrugated sheets that form the temporary staging. Only a path eighteen inches wide has been allowed in places, because it is so important to house all the plants that we possibly can accommodate. The students, being young and slim, find the path sufficiently wide for utilitarian purposes, and, as this alone is considered, honoured guests must take their chance.

Later in the year, when arums have played their part and are out-of-doors, lying resting on their sides, the staging in the market-houses is discarded. Small pebbles that the pots stood on are put into bags to be kept until they are wanted again, the corrugated sheets are placed outside, and then, within the houses, market-beds are deeply dug for sweet-peas, tomatoes, chrysanthemums, or whatever the crops may be.

When I am shown perhaps ten or twenty large glasshouses in some private garden, I sometimes feel a pang of regret that so much labour, so much money is expended without giving either much pleasure or assistance to any one. A market-house is what I should like to see in every private garden, and probably as time goes on and each year we learn

more from our Allies, the French and Belgians, we shall banish useless conservatories, the vistas of expensive glass buildings in which are often but indifferent specimens that may or may not be ready when the big shooting-party takes place, and shall fall back upon a practical market-house.

This, if intelligently worked, can supply so much in a restricted area, and where forced vegetables and fruit are required, nothing surpasses a "travelling" greenhouse used for utilitarian purposes. The trees and crops in the kitchen-garden need to be planted with forethought as regards the successions that are required, and this greenhouse, capable as it is of being wheeled from one site to another, can, under its protecting warmth, force on different crops as they are wanted.

Even if such an elaborate structure is not feasible it is quite easy to grow ample supplies of every kind of vegetable, provided the owner is prepared to dispense with some ornament. How much better, for instance, to force on food supplies beneath the staging than to have there a miniature rock-garden with ferns but seldom wanted and never looked at by the owner when he shows his friends round. Then, too, in place of some of the houses, now devoted to a mixed and ill-assorted collection of crotons, begonias, orchids, lilies, tuberoses, cyclamen, all arranged apparently to banish restfulness and cause violent surprises to the tired eye, how much more interesting it would be to concentrate one's energy upon growing well a few plants that would be of use for the dinner-table!

Glasshouses, in the average modern garden, are

required, in short, for "supply," not for botanical research or artistic effect, other than for drawing-room decoration. We want these houses to give us things to beautify the living-rooms, we require vegetables that will save buying imports from other countries, and the old-fashioned, early-Victorian glasshouse, with its jumble of many-coloured flowers, is required no longer. Only in days when ladies were considered to be too fragile to take part in outdoor pursuits was it a relaxation to them to walk into its well-kept precincts and see plants with which they would otherwise hardly have become familiar, for they were not brought into the living-rooms as they are in these present days.

But to return to our small market-house; let us walk through a door in the glass partition and enter the somewhat colder portion. Here the carnation has a place of honour, and its tall grey-green foliage looks well near a group of tuberoses much sought after by Londoners, who send for weekly boxes of flowers. Rare plants are not what people covet most, but if they can have something in mid-winter that brings a remembrance of warm days and blue skies, they gain pleasure, and it is for this reason that from Christmas onwards pots of forget-me-nots in full flower are always welcome. Mignonette and violets in pots are on the narrow shelves that go all round the house and in the centre is a group of blue cineraria, only they do not belong to that unpardonable magenta or mauve colour that often goes by the name of blue. The one we grow is powder-blue

in tone. Then, too, there is that much-treasured secret—for all market-gardeners must have one at least—which they dare not divulge ; but, to lessen curiosity, I may go so far in this case as to reveal that it is a red flower, that only one person knows the mystery of its parentage, and that we hope that some day this secret may be widely sought after but remain still unguessed. Tulips and other bulbs are everywhere in boxes and pots, waiting patiently until the right time comes for them to be taken from an ordinary temperature into the stove-house, where greater warmth will bring them rapidly into flower.

Before we enter this warm house (11 ft. by 6 ft. 6 in.) I should explain that it is the domain of second-year students. No others are allowed the privilege of working there, and as great curiosity is evinced for this unknown territory the door is locked to prevent the intrusion of absolute beginners. Here, on the staging, are tomatoes trained to arch over the house and thus make a good background for shorter plants that stand in front. Those who have a great antipathy to tomatoes could in their stead have smilax wreaths, but as it is war time, we favour the fruit because the soldiers' camps require large supplies of it. Some beans in pots placed at intervals between lilies of the valley and Gloire de Lorraine begonias may seem to some an incongruous mixture of the useful with the ornamental, but the foliage of the bean plant is so graceful that it really improves the appearance of the flowers of the other plants.

These details, which may appear insignificant,

show that in a small space it is possible, without injury to their health, to accommodate many plants combining the useful and edible with the decorative. The secret lies in judicious feeding, ventilating, and, above all, in scrupulous cleanliness. Insect pests are vigilantly watched for, and prompt sponging or fumigation is resorted to in order to put an end to them. Experience has shown me that women surpass men in these matters, chiefly because of their watchful care, a sort of loving, mother instinct which they mostly possess and which continually displays itself in acts of thoughtfulness. When I hear the remark, " I cannot do this now, for I must quickly go and put my plants to bed," I know that there is love for the plants in the gardener's heart, and then almost instinctively skilful handling follows.

There are only two other houses, and these have no pipes to warm them and are but primitive in construction, but in cold weather oil lamps prevent the temperature from falling too low. The Vinery (32 ft. by 6 ft.) was put up by a handy man who cleverly arranged a row of framelights to rest upon a low wooden shed. Besides the Alicant vine we have in it a Niphetos rose, and the rest of the space is taken up by chrysanthemum stools that are waiting to have cuttings taken from them or plants that are in that early stage of growth when they are happiest if kept in a cool temperature. The last house is the smallest one that can be built. This mere toy (6 ft. by 4 ft. 6 in.) is valued because it was once our only glass structure and therefore acts as a reminder of progress achieved. In it

are sturdy grey-foliaged stocks waiting to be moved into heat when the time comes for them to be sent to a customer.

In this brief summary of what the young gardeners have in their charge, I have not mentioned the frames, which form an important addition to our housing space. There are many rows of them, and although they are not grand ones like the brick-foundation pits that are seen in private gardens, a knowledge of them will probably be all the more useful to students when, in the future, they start market-gardens of their own. Tarred wood which has been used on the railway lines forms the framework, and the lights, unglazed, are bought separately by the dozen and in wet weather, when other work is stopped, the students are taught how to put glass in them and paint the woodwork. Having commenced with one three-light frame, we have added many each year and now possess fifty or more. In them are rows and rows of fresh green lettuce, and as fast as one plant is taken for a customer, another is planted in its place, so that an uninterrupted succession continues throughout the winter. In others are carrots and radishes, all carefully labelled so that a record can be kept of those varieties that are found to be most popular; notes are also kept each year as to the time of sowing. Sweet-peas too are there, sown towards the end of September and therefore tall enough to have slender stakes round them, while Spanish irises in boxes are waiting to be brought into greater warmth, and strawberries in pots, getting ready for forcing, complete the list of what we have.

In these cold frames and in those houses where frost is excluded much of the skill of Gardencraft lies hidden, because without the gentle, gradual development that they induce small benefit would be derived from the after-treatment in heated houses. To be successful with plants under glass it is essential to follow Nature's teaching in each detail, and only by gently and slowly moving them from dark, cold places into greater, increasing light and warmth will they respond in the same way that they do in their homes of the outdoor garden. In winter, when they rest beneath the earth or have a white covering of snow above, the sun's rays do not penetrate to them ; only as the dull days of mid-winter increase in length and the sun's power grows do the small leaves and stems rise up to be nearer the warmth and brightness. No violent or sudden changes take place in the life of plants out of doors and so in our houses we hold things back and do not allow them to go too quickly into warmth and into consequent flower.

This and many other lessons are to be learnt by watching the golden sickle moon and its neighbouring star slowly fade from view, as the sun rises in mid-January, and work begins.

CHAPTER VIII

WORK IN THE OUTDOOR GARDEN

We have seen what work in the greenhouse consists of during the short, dark days of the year. Let us now look at some operations that have been going forward in the garden outside, bearing in mind that during an exceptional winter like the present there can be no fixed rules about work. The drawbacks have been numerous, for after a summer of drought, which increased the difficulties of cultivation, we awoke in August to the fact that the wars of nations were likely to enhance, for a prolonged time, all personal troubles. During those weeks, when the autumnal disorder of a garden has to be overcome and deep digging is required, our staff of men left in order to enlist. There followed weeks of rain and boisterous gales, when treading on the land or digging it does more harm than good ; consequently the actual preparation of market-garden plots had to be postponed, though other necessary work, that could be done in bad weather, made exceptional progress.

Pergolas and trellis arches were renewed so that when the angry south-west wind, " all heavy-winged with brine," came beating up the valley

towards us, it found new, thoroughly creosoted, square posts ready to withstand all assaults. The students took a very active part in replacing this ornamental woodwork, but their most difficult task lay in cutting out all the dead or last year's branches from climbing roses in order to leave only the fresh young green stems upon which next year's flowers will come. This is a somewhat Herculean undertaking, in a place where there are several hundred climbing roses, without counting the dwarf ones, which of course are pruned in the spring.

There was one particularly stubborn, matted, thorny entanglement of roses. I think it had, each year, been left to the end of the pruning course and consequently was sometimes overlooked or neglected, for certainly it resembled a head of hair that has been dried very vigorously after a shampoo but has not been brushed or combed. This year, a determined young woman undertook its treatment, and as her *sécateurs* busily worked in and out of the dense thicket and a heap of discarded branches flung upon the ground slowly increased in height, I saw a look of relief upon her face. I came back later and watched again as the work neared its end. " I am glad after all I undertook this one," she said ; " it is so satisfactory to see that one has been able to do some good in helping the poor plant to get air and sunlight."

Her hands were sadly torn by thorns, and I feel sure they must have hurt considerably, but women never heed scratches or pin-pricks. They leave this undisputed trait to the old-fashioned, rule-of-thumb, jobbing gardener who talks about the rose-

thorns and the harm they do whilst he interrupts work to mop his brow.

When the rose branches have all been put back, properly trained so that one does not cross another, neatly tied to the tall uprights, and their roots have had a rich top dressing, yet more important work must be done.

There are many hundred fruit trees planted in regular lines from north to south down the market-garden plots, with ample room for vegetables to grow between them, and in the flower garden there are others, irregularly dotted about amongst flowering shrubs upon the terraces. These have to be pruned and it must be carefully done, for they are a good paying crop and bring in some £40 a year or more towards the receipts of the College.

An expert undertakes this work and first-year students are allowed to stand in small groups of two and three to watch how he does it. By such means they learn the theory of pruning, but it is only in their second year of experience that they are allowed to put this into practice, and so a few trees only are set apart for them to experiment upon.

In the intervals of watching they pick up all the prunings, in order that these should not lie about untidily on the land, forming as they often do secret hiding-places for insect pests. Our trees have grown so much since first they were planted that it needs the occasional use of a small saw to cut off the thickest branches. After this has been done, a student looks over each tree and with a knife makes smooth any of the jagged bits of wood

that the saw has left, for these form tiny crevices into which insects like to creep.

We are always watchful for canker, because many have an idea that apple trees grown upon chalk soil, and in particular Cox's orange pippin, soon show signs of this disease. So far, only about ten trees have become affected, which, however, by no means proves this theory to be a true one, for the origin of the trouble may sometimes be traced to a wound made in the stem by the wire which secures a zinc label. As the stem grows and thickens, the wire ring, if not loosened, cuts deep into the bark and thus a hole is made in which the insect hides. Then, too, where vegetables are grown between fruit trees, a chance blow from a spade may wound the bark and canker often follows.

Whatever has been the cause, the only chance of a cure is speedily to clean the sore place ; so the pruner ties a piece of bright orange ribbon to the tip of each affected tree, which can then be readily distinguished and can be washed. A toothbrush is the best tool to use. It is dipped in a mixture and then rubbed well into all the nooks and corners ; the same thing is then done a second time with a dry brush, so that further particles of dust are removed.

When all the pruning is finished the trees are sprayed with a mixture of lime, waterglass, sulphur, and water, and those which have canker are given a second application with a double thickness of lime. They stand out snow-white and decorated with orange bows amongst their fellows, whose

bark has only assumed a dull grey appearance. Thus, after the fashion adopted in the present Army uniforms, the wounded look gayer than the healthy ones.

Two students dressed in mackintosh coats and hats, as if they were about to sail a boat in a rough sea, perform this task with foot-pumps. The reason for their nautical equipment is that if the spray falls upon them it is easily washed off. A very still day is chosen, and, should a breeze suddenly arise, they turn their backs to it so that the wash is applied straight on to the tree and is not blown the wrong way. All these small matters, trifling in themselves, are important for the ultimate success of the apple crop and also represent valuable experience for young gardeners.

Our fruit expert always uses *sécateurs* in preference to a knife and I think he is right in this, because, for one thing, it economises time. They should last a week without requiring to be sharpened, doing steady work each day, whereas if a knife is used, it has to be sharpened every half-hour, and this delays progress. There is a further drawback, for the jerking movement of the hand that is necessary in using a knife is tiring to the eye and it distracts attention from that improvement of the general appearance and shape of the tree, upon which all effort should be concentrated.

In large orchards, where several varieties of apples are grown and are often planted in mixed groups, it is difficult, unless each tree be labelled, to recognise one kind from another. As some trees need vigorous pruning and others yield more

fruit if not too harshly dealt with, it is very helpful if a plan is drawn on paper of all the orchards. Upon it should be noted not only the exact position of each tree, but also its name and the year in which it was planted, for when fruit-picking time comes round it is so easy then to see at a glance where all the trees are that belong to the same variety.

Another important task for a wet day is to look through the seeds that have been bought for next year's crops. In a market-garden the supply is a large one and the round, heavy canvas bags tied at the neck with stout cord that stand in rows ready to be inspected remind me of pictures of the King in the nursery rhyme who was so busy counting out his bags of money. We always fancy that the seeds do well because they are kept within a very stately old oak Court cupboard, which, judging by the numerous scars and notches that it bears and the weighed-down appearance of some portions of the wide mouldings, was many centuries ago a witness of tragic history. Its wide shelves give good accommodation to many bags of all sizes and shapes arranged upon them in alphabetical order, and probably, " in the silence of the night time," it tells the young seeds much about their future, when they will lie hidden in the earth.

Meanwhile, upon days when the land is in a friendly state, neither too wet nor too hard, the various plots are bit by bit taken in hand and made ready for the time when seeds will be sown. Some parts are merely dug because they have been manured for a previous crop and therefore are best

suited for those plants that resent undue richness, but others, like the Reserve beds for sweet-peas, need careful, deep digging and plenty of manure. When the shortest day has passed, shallots are planted, and we know that they will remind us too of the longest summer day, for that will be about the time when they will be taken up for storing.

In all this preparatory work, it is of great assistance to have plans marked out upon paper, so that students can look over last year's cropping arrangement and compare it with the new plan that is proposed for the coming year. If this were done in many private gardens, it would ensure greater success with vegetables, for a rotation of crops upon different ground is so necessary and yet so difficult to carry out if there happens to be a change of gardeners and the one who planned the cropping is not on the spot to tell his successor about it. I also think that the owner of the garden would find that it would increase his personal interest in the arrangements of the kitchen garden.

Hedges now call for attention. They are treated with consideration, not merely because of the protection that they give to plants, but also on account of the reminder of their value to the landlord, which is laid stress upon in every lease, and so just now they must have a last clip with the shears before the spring. Young trees also, planted in groups together, in order to gain warmth and shelter from one another, have to be separated and arranged in other colonies where they will find more ample space for growing and perhaps help to hide an ugly shed or building.

Thus, work goes on uninterruptedly and because of the large variety of different operations groups of workers are to be seen dispersed all over the sloping hill-side garden. Strenuously and happily they perform to the best of their ability tasks that must be hurried on, so that no unforeseen circumstance or weather change shall find us unprepared.

Even after dark, there is work for those who are on what is called the " Stoking Roster." Cold and tedious as it may seem, they soon realise that if they love their plants they will willingly tend them night and day, just as a nurse patiently minds her charges, for the health and beauty of plants materially depend, as they do also with children, upon a steady, warm temperature.

Sometimes, upon a cold, frosty night, I pay a surprise visit to watch how they do it. It is well worth leaving the glowing log fire and one's books to steal out into the wonderful moonlight for a while and see that wide expanse of starlit sky and the valley with its gleaming water. Perhaps a quick-speeding London train, brilliantly lit up and with glowing sparks flying from the engine, emerges round the bend of the hills and glides snake-like through the dark. There is something almost mythical, supernatural about it, taking the mind back to those monsters of old that brave knights went out to wrestle with and overcome.

Then, as I silently stand waiting, absorbed in all this beauty of the " glittering plain," a red hurricane lantern comes swinging in at the blue gate and a man's heavy footstep tramps towards the potting-shed. Two students are already there, but

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as they are novices in the art of stoking, have to await the arrival of a second-year student who comes to criticise their work. Meanwhile, they occupy themselves with tending some oil lamps that, on extra cold nights, are put in the houses which have not a regular heating arrangement. Soon the elder student arrives, whose office it is to initiate the others in their work so that they are competent to attend to stoking for a fortnight without guidance. She is in a hurry, and so is the man who holds the red lantern and only comes to see that all goes well, ready to lend a hand should any emergency arise. Both these know their business and become quickly worried by the dilatory habits of beginners.

"Hurry up! Mid-winter! And finish the lamps quickly! It is cold waiting here." Saying which, the leader of the party walks quickly towards that somewhat unromantic-looking wooden hut which is called the "Stoke Hole."

Here we all stand watching whilst one of the novices is shown how to extract hard clinkers that have formed within the furnace. When these have been skilfully removed, the next thing to be done is to pat down a firm foundation of coke and add more and more, so that the fire keeps steady all night. The man, who, like myself, is a mere onlooker, takes the deepest interest in seeing that the work is correctly done. He is an ex-limepit worker and therefore expert at throwing lime into the yawning mouth of the lime furnace and when one of the young women, shovel in hand, places herself rather awkwardly sideways in order to

throw the coke in, I hear a somewhat mirthful sound come from his lips. " That will never do," says the elder student. " You must stand directly in front of it and put it in quickly with a sort of swing and thrust." Gradually they learn the art, but there are many points besides to be mastered, for there is much to remember about the " damper," that mysterious and ever-puzzling assistant to a boiler. Then, too, they must judge by a touch of the hand upon the pipes if heat is really as it should be.

During one of the evenings in late January, this year, a very sudden official order was issued to the effect that between the hours of 5.30 p.m. and 7.30 a.m. no lights were allowed to be seen. It was very stringent, for heavy penalties were threatened if curtains and shutters did not absolutely conceal all light within our houses, and no lamps were allowed to be carried outside. My maids brought the news from the darkened country town near by.

The brookland valley here is always a favourite haunt of aircraft, but in spite of this, we none of us believed that Zeppelins were on their way. Nevertheless, all were filled with a strong desire to carry out military orders and thus tease the enemy by concealing all landmarks from him if he should venture so far. Heavy disused curtains, travelling rugs, thick brown paper and Hessian canvas were at once seized upon and hung up so that every chink of light should be hidden.

It is astonishing how persistently light will show through cracks of doors ! I discovered this,

as I looked at my house outside whilst on my way to the Hostel beyond the garden, where many students live. There were willing hands, however, to help, and soon our hillside was shrouded in darkness, for brown paper is plentiful in a market-garden and potato-sacks are also useful to screen the glare of greenhouse lamps.

Having carried out orders, we next turned our attention to the village, and found that the large, staring windows of a Public Institute and also a glow of light from the railway station must unmistakably betray the whereabouts of inhabitants. The gardeners readily volunteered to help the jovial, placid police official to warn the village, and soon one by one the little lights in cottage windows were extinguished, so that by nine o'clock no aircraft could possibly have detected us. That night and for several succeeding nights, silence and darkness reigned in the countryside.

It is not always under the shroud of night that foreigners come to us, for we sometimes have unexpected visits from friendly ones, those who come without hostile intentions and in broad daylight because they are interested in horticulture. One of these, a Belgian refugee, arrived leading by the hand his two small children, a boy and a girl of nine and eleven years old and asked to be shown the garden. He was a miller and had been driven from his home by the Germans and as for the present it was out of the question for women and children to live near his old home he had brought his wife and family for safety to Sussex. The greater part of his possessions had been looted, but

the machinery belonging to the mill was not injured and so he was in less distress than many of his unfortunate countrymen. His deep interest in all connected with agriculture and horticulture was very evident, and I could even see traces of this in his small children, who, like all Belgians, seemed to have a love for the land. I believe that this hunger for all country pursuits is a characteristic of the industrial, town population quite as much as it is the life and soul of the rural one. No doubt, in Belgium, this is encouraged by their elaborate system of light railways, which enables workmen who have occupations in towns to regain at night their peaceful, cheap country cottages. Our visitor seemed much struck with the many uncultivated, waste spaces in England, and as he gazed contemplatively at our long "whale-backed downs" murmured, "What a land to cultivate!" Regardless of their feeding properties for sheep, he wished to convert all of them into intensively cultivated market-gardens.

As the little boy and girl raced round the rose pergola, returning breathlessly at intervals to ask questions about the students' work and the names of flowers, I was able to glean some information about "*les braves Belges*" and all they do for market-gardening. To realise the wonderful productiveness of this small country, it is necessary to represent to oneself its size as compared with that of England. It is rather less than two Yorkshires put together, or, in other words, about one-eighth of Great Britain.

Belgium is able not only to provide her own

country with fruit and vegetables, but also to export annually £230,000 worth more vegetables and £480,000 worth more fruit than she imports. Her exports should put our market-gardeners to some shame for they are chiefly sent to England.[1]

But these figures alone do not show to what extent there is a large opening for increase in our market-garden industry. We realise it most when we learn that from 1901 to 1905 the United Kingdom imported, on an average, vegetables to the value of £2,638,787 per annum more than she exported.

What acres of intensively cultivated gardens such a sum represents! Are we, in spite of the threatened blockade to our commerce, inspiring our country people sufficiently with a wish to emulate what has been done by hard-working Belgians? My answer is that as a nation we are allowing golden opportunities to pass. A few energetic individuals, some co-operative bodies of workers are greatly improving fruit and vegetable-growing in England, but are impeded by lack of capital. In order to make a real success of it they require monetary as well as appreciative assistance and, above all, the guidance of Government as well as the encouragement of the majority. It seems indeed to be regretted that such a prospect of additional wealth, to say nothing of the health-giving properties of the profession, should be so lightly passed by. Surely it is worthy of all possible assistance, not only from Government but

[1] These figures are averages for the years 1901 to 1905, and do not include exotic fruits such as oranges and lemons.

from owners of large private estates? It is not by any means our distant Colonies alone that are in need of rural workers. It is England herself who requires workers on the land, not only to build up riches but also to provide a race of hardy, active, healthy fighting men.

Perhaps the advent to our country of so many Belgian refugees, filled with enthusiasm as they are for intensive cultivation of the land, may bring improvement. Some traces of them will undoubtedly remain after their sojourn with us and in the same way that singing birds, glazed attics, and anglicised names linger in Spitalfields to recall the Walloons and French who flocked there in 1685, so too Belgian influence will in this and coming years force improvements upon our country people.

Not long ago a letter passed through my hands which was written by one who is in close touch with our Board of Agriculture. The writer said, "I have been thrown a good deal in contact with some of the refugees who have come from districts in Belgium where intensive production existed, and also have met a good many of the experts employed by the Belgian Department of Agriculture. The information that these Belgians have been able to give me has astonished me beyond description. I have been informed that the Belgian horticulturalists and small-holders can make a very good living indeed on an acre of land, and that they become rich on two or three acres, but one and all stated that without organisation they could not have accomplished what they have done."

It is in this matter of co-operative organisation that we get to the root of foreign agricultural success, and the consideration of what Belgium and other foreign countries have done and are doing suggests much for a thinking gardener to ponder over. Amongst many things to which those in authority should lend more energetic encouragement are the increase of small-holdings worked by able, well-trained rural men and women, quicker and cheaper transit than that which is at present obtainable, co-operation, and better, more helpful agricultural education adapted to men and women growers and producers.

These improvements are sorely needed and now would seem to be the fitting moment for them to be speedily taken in hand whilst a cessation from an habitually too-engrossing party political consideration of land questions is possible. They can only be introduced if strongly supported by landowners, who have it largely in their power to influence smaller folk and to teach them that in all professions there must be expansion and development of new ideas. We have only to look at the changes that have taken place in modern warfare during the last twenty years to perceive that there has been a complete upheaval and alteration of methods. So, too, in agriculture and horticulture we stand upon the borderland of fresh effort, and unless we enlighten the farmer, market-gardener and allotment-holder, who are hard-worked people, without spare time for reading and thinking outside their individual sphere, other countries will remain ahead of us. It is an intense

individualism, the desire for isolated action alone, which impedes any further enlargement of the aims that are included in that one word "Co-operation." Only by educating the grower and producer to understand the benefits that are to be gained by mutual aid can we overcome those two enemies that at present confront us when we endeavour to advocate united, combined action. These enemies are in some cases Rooted Antipathy and in other cases Indifference or Apathy. How, we ask, are they to be brought to their knees? I sincerely hope that it may be by means of the persuasive powers of the women of England.

If, affiliated to the existing Agricultural Organisation Society, or at all events in close touch with it, there could be formed a Women's Branch, to which would be attached as voluntary and in some cases paid workers, the prominent women of each county, I believe that splendid propagandist work could then be undertaken. By dividing the whole of England into counties and having in each districts and divisions, similar in construction to the supervisory work of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association, a very complete organisation could be formed. Each group of villages would thus have office-bearers, consisting of the wives of lord-lieutenants, local landowners, farmers, market-gardeners and labourers who, having studied and grasped the advantages of united, combined action, would soon convert their men-folk and get them to support it.

In this way it would become well known to all that untold advantages are within the grasp of

each individual grower if he gives up isolated action and, together with others, joins a registered co-operative society. He will gain by buying requisites and seeds which have been tested by the society's agent, the cost of which is reduced for him as a unit, because a large order was given in bulk for all the members' requirements.

Similarly, machinery for the farm and garden, so especially necessary now, whilst there is a shortage of men, can be purchased by the society for the joint use of members. A motor lorry for conveying produce from farms and gardens direct to the market or individual consumer is within reach of a community, whereas the isolated grower could never hope to use one.

It is by means of such advantages that the Danish farmer sends his small lot of eggs and butter to England, which it would not pay him to do if he dispatched his produce as a single consignment. To bulk all members' produce for dispatch is, therefore, the only way to success, because as a rule the clever grower is much too busy to be a clever salesman, and so he will welcome relief from this anxiety, if it is all done for him by the society's agent. He knows, too, that on the market a large consignment will usually stand a better chance than a number of small quantities from independent growers. Then, again, in that all-important question of enriching land, particularly if we aim at intensive cultivation, it is far easier to buy manures in bulk than for each individual to pay heavily on the transit and cost of a small quantity, and proper Government organisa-

tion should assist this by bringing about a systematised sale or distribution of all that camp manure and refuse which now represents valuable material for the improvement of market-gardens and the development of piggeries. It seems, however, at the moment, for lack of leadership, that this question, like innumerable others, will be inquired into by voluntary workers alone, in spite of its essentially official and important nature, if we regard as such the wastage of our national resources.

Yet another weak point in agricultural development is our lack of Credit Banks, an essential of which perhaps the best description is that of the Italian writer Giustino Fortunato. He says, "The poor man obtains no credit because he is poor, and he remains poor because he has no credit." How applicable is this to many a small grower who for years and maybe for life remains impeded by lack of capital. Probably in his case a mere trifle of £50 or £100, if obtained at the crucial moment, would make all the difference to his ultimate success or failure.

We know that in Germany there are some 1,700 co-operative Credit Banks, and in Denmark there are Credit Union Banks to which, as being private institutions, the State gives no loan or guarantee in deed, but appoints auditors to inspect and audit their accounts as a safeguard against fraud.

Of all these matters my Belgian friend spoke with interest, and although he kept on repeatedly assuring me that the land and all connected with it was a mere hobby or recreation with him, for his profession and serious work lay in another direction,

yet I felt that he was better informed upon these questions than many an English grower and producer. His was the wide, patriotic view, and at the same time one that, in the end, advances the prospects of the man of small resources.

It was a pleasure to me to be able to tell him that in our neighbourhood it had been possible, at the outbreak of war, to form a Society of Growers. Although in its infancy and but a humble beginning towards co-operative movement, I give below some of the aims it has in view, for they may be helpful to others who wish to increase our home-grown food supplies and their market.

THE GLYNDE AND DISTRICT FEDERATION OF GROWERS, LIMITED

(Registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1893, and Affiliated to the Agricultural Organisation Society.)

Provisional Committee :

The Viscountess Wolseley, Ragged Lands, Glynde.
Mr. James Adams, All Saints', Lewes.
Mr. James John Buffard, Beacon Nurseries, Ditchling.
Mr. Fred. T. Fenner, The Chestnuts, Ringmer.
Miss E. R. More, F.R.H.S., Ragged Lands, Glynde.
Mr. G. H. Simmons, Beechlands, St. John's Road, Polegate.
Mr. Henry Vincent, Vincent's Gardens, Ditchling.

What was the Origin of the Society ?

At a meeting of growers held at Lewes on October 17, 1914, a resolution was passed that it was desirable to form a Growers' Co-operative Society for the district. The above Provisional Committee was appointed and registration of a Society under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act was decided upon.

What is the Nature of the Society?

A Co-operative Society managed by a Committee appointed by the members at the annual meeting, each member having one vote.

What are its Objects?

To take any steps advisable for the safeguarding of the members' work and interests when necessary either as a whole or individually:

(*a*) By regulating the supply, thus avoiding glut.
(*b*) By conducting negotiations with agents and salesmen.
(*c*) By securing information as to prices of salesmen in the various markets.
(*d*) By packing and grading.
(*e*) By bulking consignments so as to take advantage of reduced railway rates.
(*f*) By establishing a local market or markets for the sale by auction or otherwise, should it at any time be deemed advisable.
(*g*) To purchase co-operatively seeds, manure, packing materials, implements, etc.

What is the Capital of the Society?

There is no fixed capital, but the shares are of the nominal value of £1 each, of which only 1*s*. is payable on application and the remainder in such calls as the Committee may direct. No call is to exceed 2*s*. 6*d*. per share.

What is the Constitution?

The Glynde and District Federation of Growers, Ltd., is registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, with Rules approved by the chief Registrar.

Who is Eligible for Membership?

Any Grower who requires goods for his holding or garden or who has produce for disposal.

How can a Person become a Member?

By forwarding to the Hon. Secretary the attached form of application in an ordinary stamped addressed envelope addressed to the " Hon. Secretary, The Glynde and District Federation of Growers, Ltd., Ragged Lands, Glynde, Lewes." Members are elected by the Committee. To be a member at least one share must be taken in the Society, but any member may take shares up to the value of £200.

What is the Liability of Members?

The liability of each member is strictly limited to the amount unpaid on each share taken. When a member has fully paid up his shares (and he may do this whenever he wishes) he is under no further liability whatever, no matter what obligations the Society may incur.

What are the Chief Obligations of a Member?

The main obligation is loyalty to the Society. Members are, of course, at liberty to deal where and how they wish, but it is earnestly hoped that members will support the Society in order that they may reap the full benefit of united and co-operative action.

How are any Profits to be Disposed of?

The first charge on the net profits is the payment of 5 per cent. interest on the paid-up share capital. The balance of any net profits are allocated as follows:

(*a*) Not less than one-half to a reserve fund until this fund equals the share capital.

(*b*) Not less than 5 per cent. to the workers employed by the Society at the time the division takes place.

(*c*) The remainder of the net profits are divisible amongst the members.

How you can make the Society a Success.

You can not only join yourself but you can induce other interested persons, likely to benefit by the co-operative move-

ment, to join. The present time is the right time to launch a Society with every possible chance of success if the Society is active as the Committee of this Society intend it to be. The present national demands are great, and if growers in the district of Glynde make united effort and work together under the auspices of this Society they will certainly secure some of the benefits which will undoubtedly accrue almost immediately from intelligent co-operative production and distribution.

How can I obtain further Particulars of the Society?

By addressing any question to the Hon. Secretary of the Society at Ragged Lands, Glynde, Sussex.

Form of Application for Membership.

A form is attached hereto and can be filled up, signed, and forwarded to the Hon. Secretary of the Society (Ragged Lands, Glynde, Lewes) at any time.

TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE GLYNDE AND DISTRICT FEDERATION OF GROWERS, LIMITED

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I, the undersigned, hereby apply for membership in the above-named Society, in respect of which I agree to comply with and to make the payments required by or by virtue of the rules of the Society, and otherwise to be bound thereby.

Name in full.....

Address .....

Occupation .....

Usual signature.....

Dated this.....day of.....19....

When the women of England have systematised work so that they may act as propagandists of co-operation in agriculture and horticulture, they will find much that is ready waiting, in fact almost asking to be taken in hand, and with those exceptional gifts for organisation which the majority of women possess in a marked degree, will speedily extend and solidify what now is the mainstay of foreign countries, but with us is only rising slowly and dimly above the horizon.

CHAPTER IX

THE NEW COTTAGE

This winter we lost an old friend from amongst the village community. For twenty years the little tinkling down church bell was rung by him each Sunday. If he ever failed to do so, it was because a heavy bronchial cold kept him indoors, or, as the old people would more graphically describe it, " because his breath was bad, he could not walk so far."

When one mentions the death of our sexton to a friend, the prompt reply is " Yes, we all miss old Richard, and probably as time goes on we shall do so more and more. He was a quiet fellow who never said much, but when need arose he was firm and positive about those things that he thought were right."

No other bell-ringer will ever hold quite the same honoured position amongst us. There was a sense of duty unfailingly adhered to that surrounded like a halo that small head of sandy-coloured hair and the kindly, weather-beaten, smiling face. As I enter the high, vaulted vestibule that leads into church, I shall always see in imagination his little slender, bent figure, with its two arms outstretched clutching high up the stout

rope, whilst his foot worked in steady time to the measured ring of the old bell.

One winter Sunday he was too ill to leave home, and when the next one came and it was time for evening service, it seemed as if his soul could not find rest without accomplishing its wonted weekly task. No longer could he take his half-mile walk by the bleak, wind-swept corner near the open fields and then up through the sheltered blackness of the ilex trees to ring the bell, and so he breathed his last and went to join the choirs of saints in heaven.

His passing away has indirectly affected our arrangements, because it was in rooms attached to the quaint old farm-house which he and his family occupied that the Admiral's tea-party and other amusing entertainments took place.

Young "Horatio," who, you will perhaps remember, took such a prominent part in it, and other possessions connected with the Fairies of Let's Pretend have been removed elsewhere. Probably in the end this will prove to be a fortunate change of plans, as it will mean the eventual possession of a suitable home of her own by our Principal; but meanwhile, when plans are maturing, she has taken up a temporary dwelling in a cottage near the old farm.

It is the middle portion of a large old-fashioned block of three cottages. The roof, as is often the case in ancient Sussex homesteads, is high and slopes upwards to a fine large central chimney that keeps the whole building warm and dry, and on its western side is coloured by bright yellow

lichen. Fine old beams of oak, showing clearly the shape of the tree that they were hewn from, support red grey brick walls, mellowed by age, so that no definite colour is noticeable, only a delightful quiet-toned medley that artists love to reproduce. The windows are wide and recall shadows of busy weavers who sat within plying the shuttle, before those days when the work of a village community for its own individual advancement was replaced by far-reaching steam inventions and the wider developments of factory life. Plenty of light, therefore, streams in through the many divisions fitted with lead lights and diamond-shaped panes, and the porch with its whitewashed walls forms an alcove in which people can sit with their work when twilight comes and the rooms within darken.

Altogether, the cottage itself, a small strip of ground in front running down to the little country lane and the surroundings of fine elms and park-land close by make it a most inviting home. The view from the living-rooms, looking out east over a great stretch of the Weald, broken only here and there by a rounded knoll of grass-land, a slender spire rising from amidst protecting trees or some few scattered cottages and having further south a distant outline of the great Downland beacon called Firle, is restful and very beautiful.

Not far away is the fairy-haunted wood with its silent pool in which wild swans like to nest. Here they can be undisturbed, for even the children go there seldom, it is so dark, so full of mystery, so surrounded by that feeling of past history that

clings to the spot where for many centuries an old manor-house garden once has been. Do Pelhams, Morleys, Hays, and Trevors, members of those families that once dwelt near, revisit old haunts on twilight evenings, when bluebells make a rich carpet beneath the high trees? Surely we feel them near us and only the sudden splash and dart of the moorhen across the water spirits them away. Does Her Grace of Newcastle drive by in her stately coach, wending her way slowly with a fitting retinue through the heavy chalk lanes that wind along the foot of the downs from Bishopstone by the sea to her fine home at Halland, with its sweet-scented lime avenue? Was it she or another possessor of that name whose book-plate shows a fine library interior, beneath which, in flowing eighteenth-century letters with all their graceful twists and rounded flourishes, are engraved two words, "Given me," and after them, in her own fair hand, is written in each case the name of the donor. The ink has faded in many copies of this ex-libris, but in most is discernible a rather unformed, childish "my Lord," which follows the two engraved words, showing that the Duchess treasured greatly the gifts of her devoted husband. Whichever Pelham lady it is whose chariot wheels are heard upon stormy nights, she lives, we feel sure, in more reposeful memories than the great ladies of the present day. "I am bankrupt of time" is an expression which, freely used by a twentieth-century duchess, with hooting motor-car ready to convey her to the seventh committee meeting of one brief day, would not be understood

by the Dream Duchess who, we hope, still comes this way.

But it is modern, present-day gardening and what pertains to it that we should be considering, not the faint perfume of faded pot-pourri that the Weavers' windows and old Richard, the sexton, led us to think of, because it is wafted by the wind across the Weald near his old farm.

After the oak dresser and its pewter plates, the grandfather clock and all the tables and chairs had been moved to the new home, only a brief twenty-four hours elapsed before the front garden was taken in hand. I was asked to walk over one morning and watch all that took place, so accordingly, upon one of those early spring days when all the world is suddenly filled with music and the song of the thrush is drowned by many sky-soaring larks and even their music dwindles into insignificance near the sheepfolds where lambs call loudly to their mothers, I set out for the little hamlet on the outskirts of which is the cottage which we still call " The house with no name."

The first familiar object that I saw, standing outside the garden wall, was our hand-barrow, laden with tools which were to be used in making beautiful this poor neglected strip of ground. On it was a large sack full of rich soil with which the best plants were to be top-dressed, as well as a bundle of tall wooden posts to form supports for climbing roses. Several boxes of Madonna lily crowns had also been brought and were to make a white line upon either side of the red brick path that leads from the road to the door of the cottage.

Everything had been drawn on paper by the head student in charge, and I was asked to criticise freely, for all that pertains to garden design or structural addition comes under my jurisdiction. Two large square beds for mixed flowers had been marked out and in order to convey the meaning of the ground-plan more graphically to the casual observer, a coloured sketch, or what we call a " prospective " one, showing heights and varieties of flowers, was also given.

Plants were chosen and arranged in groups with a view to giving that delightful cottage-garden feeling of natural, informal effect, so typical of England, and narrow paths round the beds, two feet wide, were suggested as a means of tending the flowers without having to step upon damp earth.

Upon either side, where the boundary line of the two other cottage gardens came, tall plants such as hollyhocks and sunflowers were to form a screen and in their midst pillars of wood supporting rope festoons were to have climbing roses trained to them. There was space besides for a miniature rock garden built against the wall on the sunny side of the road, exposed, it is true, to attacks from the chance passer-by, but worth attempting because the more unenclosed waste spaces are beautified, the less temptation will prevail amongst plant-robbers to carry out their work of destruction. It is usually the excitement of overcoming difficulty and capturing a hidden prize without detection that is the chief incentive to the garden thief.

Two square beds, beneath the living-room

windows, were reserved for sweet-smelling flowers alone, so that the scent of wallflowers, stocks and nicotiana should be wafted to the cottage day and night. Each of these, when decorated by a central feature, such as a bold pottery jar standing upon a pedestal, would recall perhaps a Benozzo Gozzoli Italian scene, where blue-robed saints busy themselves in planting thyme or sweet-scented verbena in ornamental vases and suspend wreaths of roses on them.

The position that the climbing honeysuckles were to occupy had to be chosen, for they were to form arched vistas through which the cottage could be seen from the road and two were to join together high up over the swing gate so as to make a frame for the white porch with its grey-tiled roof to which the Madonna lilies lead.

Years of hurried and superficial spade-work could be traced in the slope of the ground of these cottage gardens, for in no direction did the lie of the land coincide with the horizontal beams of the walls of the houses. The labourer had not considered appearances, but had merely wished to dig the land quickly, so that his crops would benefit by any extra slope towards the south that could be obtained. The property was not his and therefore the main consideration was speed and successful cultivation, so that, should he have the misfortune to offend his master, he might stand a chance of securing his own potatoes, or parsnips, before moving on to other employment and a new home. But this hurried tilling of the soil gives often an insecure and tottering

appearance to a fine building and has to be counteracted by the Garden Craftsman. The best way of correcting the lie of the ground is by means of levelling it, but as, in our case, it was important to push on quickly with the work, it was decided to deceive the eye somewhat by placing tall uprights where the ground sloped downwards and putting shorter ones on the opposite side where the earth was on a higher level. This had the desired effect, for the crosspieces that were carried horizontally from one upright to another then coincided with the layers of brickwork and the beams of the house beyond. Harmony and restfulness were thus restored and the building had gained in appearance.

Towards evening, when the six young women-gardeners had completed their task, it was indeed a delight to see the bare ground transformed into a garden of flowers. Canterbury bells, forget-me-nots, roses had been moved from other ground and although they were only recognisable by their leaves, yet such is the vigour of imagination that possesses true gardeners, we saw them all in their future summer beauty. Six blue-green wooden boxes, discarded by the village shop but well-suited to hold fuchsias, were arranged to make a formal pattern beside the entrance and near the red-brick paths. They stand upon red bricks and are thus raised off the ground, which ensures good drainage to the plants they hold and gives height above the flowerbeds, an improvement to any garden, however small it may be.

At the back of the house is an old-fashioned well

from which water is drawn by means of a wheel and bucket. Here, too, was work to be planned for the future and a level space was pegged out to form a circle, where, on paving-stones, the owners of all three cottages could meet and draw water. Some day that garden too will be transformed and rows of tall blue delphiniums will lead the way to a circular rose arbour round the well, where children can play " Kiss in the Ring " whilst their mother busily plies her needle.

When many hours of trenching and planting were accomplished, a welcome relief came in the shape of tea and cakes laid on the old oak table in the parlour. Our gardeners never enter a house without washing their hands and removing their heavy boys' boots and leather gaiters and this ceremony, which recalls Eastern custom, when stockingless or slippered feet alone are allowed to tread upon good carpets, takes place in the white-washed scullery. The latter gives access from the back of the house to the one spacious living-room, which had evidently been made large for the accommodation of all the members of a workman's family.

On cold winter nights we can picture them resting after a hard day's work, grouped together within the warm recess formed by the chimney. Probably no light was needed other than that given out by the huge, unwieldy logs that the workman had managed to collect each day during his dinner hour or if his wife could not see well enough to do her cooking by the firelight, then an old Sussex rush-holder was used. So twilight

would darken into night until it was time for the dustman to come and close the eyes of weary children who had to be off early to school next day.

As we look round at the massive oak beams, possibly used originally in the structure of an Elizabethan ship and then finding more complete rest in forming the really beautiful decoration of this plain whitewashed room, the place seems peopled again with past generations of healthy, happy, simple-hearted country folk—the ones whom we have need of now for our English countryside.

These old cottages, built with solidity and thoroughness by local work-people who belonged to the village and took an almost personal interest in each handiwork of theirs, are so different from the cheap, thinly-built and badly-designed dwellings that are run up quickly in modern days and often placed in rows forming such displeasing features in the midst of beautiful scenery. "A dreadful draught runs right through the house, when we open our front door," said a poor woman to me, not long ago. We agreed that it was inconsiderate of the architect to place the door so that it faced the prevailing wind and to omit a projecting porch or small vestibule that would have helped to lessen the rush of air as it came directly into the living-room. In olden days they were not fastidious enough about the number of bedrooms or their height of ceiling, but other practical details that gave cupboard space and dry walls they studied more than we do.

The quaint cottage that we are now considering

has a stout outer door to the porch and within it, to one side and thus breaking any through draught, another of oak which leads into the kitchen. Opposite this, opening out of the porch, is a fascinating store closet, with a " look out " window by means of which ventilation can be given to all the many jams and preserves that a thrifty housewife likes to keep under lock and key. People who work hard all the week are not always able to spare time to walk some miles to a neighbouring town each Saturday for the purchase of groceries and so a store-room is of great value in a cottage. Another saving of time and help towards general cleanliness is a big bath placed in the scullery near the copper. If it is so constructed that it will tip up in the daytime, there can be no excuse of its taking up space in a small room and it can be so arranged that, in the process of tipping, the bath water is emptied into a channel in the garden. Such simple devices, arranged with some forethought and consideration, would help a labourer's wife considerably to get through the strenuous work she often has in cooking, clothing and washing for a large family.

We all of us, however divergent our views may be upon other questions, regret the extent to which the Rural Exodus has taken place in England. Ever since Oliver Goldsmith drew his realistic picture of what was then commencing, the strong, active, capable workman has deserted his village to seek elsewhere the advancement that he and his family are justly entitled to. No energetic man will brook the feeling that only in the heyday

of activity, whilst his sons are yet at home and able to add to the family earnings, can he put by money. Even when he is working overtime, up early in the half-light and toiling on till darkness overtakes him, when his wife is doing a bit of " charring " and the youngsters bring home a few shillings a week, there does not remain much to swell the savings when the last day of December comes round. Should any accident occur to prevent his working steadily, should his wife fall ill or have to undergo an operation, where will the extra money come from? Only from hand to mouth can many of them live and even with the greatest resourcefulness on the part of the woman it is often impossible to pay all that is owing to the friendly village shop. Is it to be wondered at, then, that the labourer asks himself if it would not be more prudent to run no risk of workhouse days, but to emigrate to the Colonies? Work may be harder there, it may mean more roughing it for " the mother," but there will be a prospect of owning land and of tilling and improving something which can be handed on to the children later. Can we blame him and should we not do likewise?

If his wife does not fancy going to a distant country, leaving father and mother for good and not seeing old friends again, then they decide that town life will be best, because it means better housing, greater facilities for bringing up children well, and a less monotonous existence. Probably the weekly wage, even though it be higher than a country one, will vanish more rapidly, because food and clothing are dearer where many people live

crowded together; probably, too, the children will not be so healthy and doctors' fees will mount up. These considerations are, however, only felt after the family move has taken place, when it is too late to draw back.

Certain it is that until we awake from lethargy and give full and careful consideration to the better housing and more comfortable living of village working men, the Rural Exodus will continue. All such improvements, including a reasonable living wage, the possibility of eventual ownership of a plot of ground, or its tenure upon some secure basis, the advantages of a practical rural education arranged upon a country system, not a town one, have been a crying need for centuries. When will they be undertaken?

When our men return, many of them crippled for life from wounds received in the war, will they wish to go back to their village homes? Most certainly they will, if all these facilities are offered; but where it depends upon the good offices of but a few energetic and far-seeing landlords, many of them impoverished themselves and unable to carry out those things that they know to be of individual as well as national importance, no far-reaching results will accrue. A stronger leadership than this is wanted and again we may turn with confidence to the women of England, who, when they see that a thing is of paramount value to other mothers, those upon whom we are relying to bring up future soldiers and sailors, the bulwark of our Empire, will most assuredly give heed and leave no stone unturned to bring about improvement.

These matters, which concern the health of future generations and the repeopling of our land, whereby with skilled practical labour we are made independent of foreign food supplies, should not be allowed to hinge upon party politics. The repeopling of our Colonies is much talked of, but first let us induce men and women to settle in the Mother Country and obtain all the riches that this island holds in store for us, but which we have not sufficiently sought.

Boys and girls who are trained first to work well on the land in England will be better able to cope with the severe hardships that are met with in Colonial life ; they will, from their past experience here, be able to maintain success in newer countries and not fail, as so many do, from lack of true knowledge and perseverance.

There is nothing, perhaps, that would assist more to bring about the re-establishment of the country labourer than a better type of cottage and the possible ownership of it and some small plot of ground. The latter point is all-important, and it should be remembered how true is the saying—

"Labourer pour autrui, c'est un p'tit labourage ;
Faut labourer pour soi, c'est ça qui donne courage."

By means of many Building Societies that offer to advance loans that are not difficult to repay, it should be possible, before long, to erect many comfortable homes and if ladies interest themselves in a practical way and endeavour to restrict the work of the housekeeper by placing every

convenience close at hand, they will be adding greatly to the chances of success. There are so many details connected with building that women are far more competent to advise upon than many an architect, who knows but little about the work of a kitchen or nursery.

As I leave the students to continue their garden-making, when their merry tea-party is at an end, I fall in with two old friends whom I often meet and always find most entertaining. They are the roadmenders. Both are deaf, but there is a difference in their means of acquiring information ; for the one who can hear when remarks are shouted at him in a high-pitched voice can neither read nor write, whilst the other, who can only be made to understand by means of signs and gesticulation, is able to read a newspaper.

In spite of their physical troubles these two are able to follow the topics of the day and the one who is " a scholar " can successfully impart to his friend any news that appears in the local paper. I am often astonished at the amount of thought they are able to give, not merely to the differing gradients of the by-road, the stumpy hedge that will not grow near the dangerous turning and the flints that have been put down at a bad time when they will not " bind " and improve the road, but also to politics and all the wider aspects of country life.

My friend Jesse, who is the one who can hear my remarks, has a memory that is very highly developed. Whatever occurrence of the past he tells me about is invariably accurately dated, not

only by the year, but also by the month, and sometimes even the day of the week. For instance, in speaking of a familiar tree that was felled by a storm he is apt to say, "Why, bless your dear soul, I remember it was on a Friday, and on the 15th of January, because my mother died two days after, and that was in the year 1896." Then, too, his observations of clouds, wind and weather are unfailingly accurate, and if he and his mate prophesy a wet morrow I believe them. It is, however, upon subjects that concern the welfare of their neighbours that I like to hear their views, for the working man is too reserved and proud to talk of his own troubles, and, if he does chance to touch upon them, will hurriedly add, "It might be so much worse than it is, and there is much to be grateful for." One point that all agree upon is that the young women, those who now are between eighteen and thirty years of age, are not content or satisfied with village life and crave for the excitement and varied existence to be met with in towns. More independent than their mothers were when they were young, they have not had an education or training that has developed either good housekeeping qualities or usefulness in farm work. School life has fitted them more to search for town interests and they are not content to keep house for their playmates Bill or Tom, unless they, too, alter and no longer follow the plough but migrate nearer to the cinema palaces. Then if they do settle down in their old homes, their knowledge of cooking and housekeeping is so superficial that they are not thrifty.

In these war days and as we look ahead toward the difficult years that must inevitably follow, it seems incredible that the labourer and his family can continue to live as they now are forced to do, unless they seek other work. Food prices have risen, and, although wages are better than they were, yet what a struggle it is when there are hungry, growing boys and girls to be kept clothed and fed!

Those who are interested in this subject would find much information accurately given in the tables that have been compiled by M. F. Davies in *Life in an English Village*."[1] It is there shown, amongst other examples, that the very lowest, necessary, weekly income for a family of two adults and three children is 16*s*. 10*d*. per week, and when we realise that out of this 4*s*. 1*d*. is all that is allowed for dress, fuel, and household sundries, we know that this sum has indeed been carefully portioned out so that as many pennies as possible may be put by for future wants if the weekly wage-earnings exceed the total. These tables profess only to show that " efficiency is possible " if this 16*s*. 10*d*. is spent, and we can well imagine the far more thorough work and greater mental capability that would be shown by the whole family if food and clothing allowances were raised above this minimum sum. Another important fact is that nothing is left for clubs, insurance, or any provision for old age and, moreover, that the book was written before the war began when food was considerably cheaper than it is now.

[1] Published by T. Fisher Unwin in 1909.

There is no doubt that those who bravely remain on the land, content to work for wages ranging between 15*s*. and 18*s*. per week, are not being given a chance of doing their full share in rearing up a strong, healthy future generation. The excuse often given by an employer is that the man's work is not worth more than 15*s*. per week. It seems hard, if so, that children and the nation, too, should suffer for this, because if their health and future working powers are impaired, it means that there are fewer strong men and women to build up the Empire. A plant, we know, cannot grow without warmth and food, neither will a child, if it is underfed, develop brain and muscular strength. Another reason that is often given for making no alteration in the home life of a labourer is that wages used to be much less than they are now, and the remark is added, "He was able to manage well enough then." Many changes have taken place in the last few years, and amongst them we notice the rapid increase of motor-cars for farmers, motor engines for electric light and water-pumping that are within their reach, all of which shows advancement, but necessitates a better type of workman, when he can be encouraged to settle near the farm. Food prices have risen, and even the labourer cannot now live in a quiet, old-fashioned way such as the farmer and employer were accustomed to before the use of petrol became general. Both, therefore, and not one alone, need to move up a rung of the ladder in order to place the important industry of agriculture in the true, honoured position which she and her workers should hold.

A writer who has given much thought to this subject of the workman and what he can live on, has collected statistics which show that, not many years ago, it was no infrequent thing in Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire to find the agricultural labourer's wages as low as 10*s*., 11*s*., and 12*s*. a week. He sums up this state of things in one brief sentence by saying, " A bold stroke of statesmanship can alone save our countryside from being denuded of brain-stuff and manual labour."

I sometimes ask myself how much longer we shall have to wait for the statesman who will contrive and carry out this work.

CHAPTER X

WHAT WOMEN IN CANADA ARE DOING FOR THEIR COUNTRY

In considering this all-important subject of retaining the right kind of workers on the land, of making them healthy, resourceful, and happy, it is desirable that we should think of them, not as isolated, scattered inhabitants, but as dispersed evenly throughout our counties, in co-ordinated bodies, without undue crowding. In this way alone will they prosper commercially, in this way alone will monotony of existence and stagnation be put an end to. By recalling the words of that great thinker, George Meredith, who said, "Let us have an Imperial people at home," we know that in his opinion the first essential of an Empire is to raise the average standard of our home population. Many of our leaders have hitherto directed the majority to dispatch people abroad in order to expand the Colonies, but beneficial as this has been in enlarging the strength of the Empire, it has hindered attention being bestowed sufficiently upon development at home. This is now a vulnerable point, for in allowing ourselves to become engrossed with a more distant scene,

many of us have forgotten the weakened condition of English country life. It is essential that rural industry and rural interests should be all-powerful, that urban industry should learn to appreciate and always keep in mind the overwhelming importance of the cultivation of land, and do sufficient honour to it in assisting its increase, in raising the position of its workers.

This we know can only be accomplished by means of improvements briefly reviewed in the previous chapter, such as good housing, nourishing food, and an existence divided more evenly into three parts, whereby sleep, work, and play become so well balanced that they allow the production of the very best work. By these things alone can well-adjusted power and energy be set in motion.

A writer who has considered this subject at great length, in deploring the deserted appearance of one of our southern counties, says, " We await some bold constructive policy of colonisation such as a modern Agricola might have projected," and he goes on to ask if a proper organisation and building up of the country population in England will only come about when " some intellectual shepherd of the Downs " rises with undimmed perceptions to revive the foundation of this great work which was laid so many hundred years ago, when Roman legions watched over England and brought her fresh, inspiring ideas. We have seen how lack of movement and means of advancement have resulted in the departure of expert rural workers to the towns, and, unless it is possible speedily to revive the " Rural Community " in a

true sense of the word, making it consist of associations of people possessing the same interests and bound together by united high ideals, we *shall*, when the Great War has ceased, fail to establish ex-soldiers on the land.

Those who have lived on the land, have studied these questions and been able to give expression to them, often place a higher value upon social effects that result from co-operative organisation than upon economic benefits that come with it. Belgian refugees and others have described the saving that it effects for the grower, enabling him to buy cheap and sell at a fair price, but this monetary side of the question is not the only one to be considered. There is a higher, finer motive, and it is the character-building that ensues from it which should be our chief national aim in teaching the value of co-operation. In short, it has to be borne in view that, until we secure for country dwellers food for the mind and soul as well as for the body, we shall not obtain by means of their work the increased home-grown supplies which cultivation of waste land and better tillage should place at the disposal of the nation. These higher ideals connected with organisation in rural districts have nowhere received greater attention than in Canada, and the leaders there of this splendid work are women.

When we read about the Women's Institutes, which in Ontario alone possess nearly twenty-five thousand members divided amongst eight hundred and forty-three branches, it must be confessed that in energy, perseverance, and a true grasp of the

requirements necessary to stem the Rural Exodus, Canada has far surpassed the Motherland. Her women are not only giving their best thought and many hours of work to remedying weaknesses that already exist, but are also, like true pioneers, looking to the future. They see before them additional difficulties when the Great War is ended ; they know that then many conditions will alter, more women will have to earn a living, fewer men will be there to work, a large number of strangers will go to live in Canada, and that therefore they must now safeguard their country, keeping it Canadian and British, remembering always that unity is strength.

They are not leaving these questions to settle themselves or postponing work that they hope to complete ; they long ago laid a solid foundation and it is only necessary now for them, during these anxious months of waiting, to add propelling force to machinery which is already in existence. It is, I feel sure, a mere question of making their work known, of pointing out how necessary it is for us to copy so brilliant an example, and then the daughters of England will rise up and follow upon similar lines in an endeavour to improve social and educational matters in rural districts.

Very far-reaching is the influence exercised by women, for only in so far as a country reverences its womanhood does it attain permanent greatness. If its ideal type of woman is a high one, morals are pure and a noble standard of conduct is the result. We hear how the women of Germany are at the moment fired by patriotism and a sense of dangers

that surround their Fatherland, strenuously undertaking munition work, tilling the land, bringing in the harvest, studying economy in their homes. All this is fine work that they have carried on since the outbreak of war and, owing to the strong leadership given them and the detailed plans of their exceptional Government organisation, they have merely to obey orders and carry out, with industry, what they are told to do. We cannot fail to confess our admiration for this regulated and well-ordered effort of our enemy, but is there not all the same a lack in them of higher, nobler influences? Surely, if the women of Germany had during past and present years been allowed to hold a more independent existence, had they been permitted scope for initiative, they would never have permitted their gentle, human thoughts and opinions to become submerged in a mere war machine. Had they possessed a higher influence and been capable of expressing it strongly, this war would not have taken place or, even if sheer necessity had brought it about, it could only have been carried on within those strictly defined rules that a civilised and highly-cultivated people alone creates.

If we want proof of how much diplomatic negotiations may be influenced by women, we have only to turn to Bismarck's Memoirs, where we find irritation expressed at the mild measures so continually thrust upon this exceptionally strong man, owing to views that were urged by those whom he called "politicians in petticoats." Again, whilst the Siege of Paris was in progress in 1870, when it became dangerously protracted as regards eventual success

for Germany and Bismarck recommended that bombardment should take the place of siege in order to hasten victory, the Empress Augusta and her Court ladies exercised their powers of persuasion to frustrate his wishes. We are told " the secret of it all is that the Empress, with ideas that she has got from England, cant ideas as to ' humanity ' and ' civilisation,' prevents us from carrying through our military measures as we ought to."

These facts, coupled with the deplorable cruelty shown by Germans in the present war, show plainly how quickly culture and civilisation may revert to barbarism unless care is exercised in spreading high standards and lessons of humanity amongst the young. In order to influence character and increase noble ideals amongst boys and girls, it seems all-important that both men and women should work together upon Educational Committees and in those assemblies that are concerned with what they share together in public life.

The following expression of opinion concerning the helpfulness of woman's work, as considered from a man's point of view, shows plainly with what diplomatic skill, tact, and common sense Canadian women have entered into the advancing movements of the day. In an address, the Honourable W. H. Hearst, Premier of Ontario, says, " In politics we say that if we can secure the help and co-operation of one married woman, even though she has not a vote, that is at least equal to two or three votes, and if we can secure the assistance of one unmarried woman, that is at least equal to a dozen votes. And we know what we can do in

every walk in life, if we can get the influence of women with us."

We women, on the other hand, fully appreciate how many things there are that man alone can do, but so candid an acknowledgment does not prevent the certainty that in the discussion of most public questions concerning men and women workers, more especially those that deal with education, women should be and in many cases are welcomed by men, for the views of both are essential to a just and wise decision. There is one thing that a man cannot make for himself, and that is a home, and here again, in all that bears upon the family, its upbringing, food, clothing, housing, and social conditions, it is the woman who bears the heavier burden and therefore she can best help to decide about such matters.

The women of Canada have for a long time been in the forefront of advancement, and probably they owe much of their calm, non-hysterical way of dealing with public questions to the teaching of Mme. Peltrie and others, who, sacrificing their happy homes, gave up all to go out to Canada, in order to train and educate young settlers of the Colony. The forethought and resourcefulness of these pioneers were transmitted to those who followed after them, advantages which together with the simple social conditions that prevail where people live by the work of hands and brain, free from the over-engrossing distractions that luxury brings in its train, have helped to evolve modern Canadian women.

Marked progress was made by them about fifty

years ago, when to the astonishment of their less go-ahead sisters in England, they started a Women's Club in New York City, where discussion of all public questions could take place. Long after this the foundation of the Women's Institutes was laid, and in order to show how much good these have done, I shall endeavour to give an account of their origin, the aims that were at first kept in view, and how these have expanded to such a degree that they now have created far-reaching national results. Although social conditions and intercourse between people who belong to different spheres of life are mistakenly complicated in an old country like England, hopeful signs are now evident that improvement and simplifications of these conditions are likely to take place, and therefore much that this Canadian work has brought about could doubtless be copied and utilised by us. How it can be done, and which of our many energetic women will best carry out the scheme, can only be decided when we know the full value of what is progressing in Canada.

A great organisation often has but a humble commencement, and this was the case with Women's Institutes. As recently as 1897, a small band of women met in a village and, under direction of one of their number, it was arranged that they should hold monthly meetings in order to discuss household affairs, exchange cooking recipes, and mutually help each other by giving advice upon domestic matters. From this sprang a network of branches and, in Ontario alone, the result has been that some thirty thousand women and girls are

closely connected with the work, because twenty-four thousand homes are represented by one member from each and, besides these, every household has several women belonging to it, who, although they are not members, may attend meetings. Having commenced in Ontario and made rapid progress there, the work gradually spread to other provinces and in some of these the branches are known as "Home-makers' Clubs."

Teachers and organisers trained in Ontario are now to be found carrying on the work in distant Provinces, each one of which is represented ; and knowledge of it is further extended by classes and demonstrations that are given for the benefit of young women and girls, who are not necessarily members, but often become so interested that they eventually join the Institutes.

A very considerable degree of success has been obtained as follows :

1. The origin was humble, but the scheme being well laid and its supporters industrious and active, the work has increased steadily.

2. The Governments of the Provinces give it liberal financial support and hold out every encouragement to this splendid organisation ; besides this, the Department of Education lends books of fiction, instruction, and biography to the Institutes by means of Travelling Libraries.

Great stress should be laid upon the advantages to be obtained from Government assistance, for so often admirably-planned schemes fall to the ground because voluntary workers have not sufficient capital with which to carry them out.

3. Women's Institutes do not work in a narrow groove. The wonderful thing about them is that rich and poor mingle together and work in perfect harmony, and that people from town and country, those who belong to all creeds and denominations, are brought together. Many who formerly interested themselves in some small church-aid work have become members in order to avail themselves of a wider scope for helpfulness. By co-operating with Farmers' Institutes and Farmers' Clubs all social gatherings, debates, and entertainments become more effective and a wider, more masculine outlook is obtained. The Farmers' Institute represents everything connected with food production, and the Women's Institute bears upon human welfare as far as it concerns both old and young women; hence it will be seen that the combination of the two classes of work covers much which relates to rural life.

Having in early days embraced only cooking, housework, the physical welfare of the child, sanitation, and those things that are included in bringing up a family, the Women's Institutes have now adopted " Home and Country " as their motto and include in their discussions questions which relate to community improvement and nation-building. Starting with those things which bear upon the child and its growing days, they now form a propelling force, not only to boys and girls, but also to men and women. At their meetings all public questions such as Civic Improvement, School Inspection, the laws and by-laws which regulate the morals and welfare of the community, are discussed.

These are naturally of intense interest to the mother of a family, because their eventual development must affect her children and their future families. Likewise, where the material prosperity and the mental and moral welfare of boys and girls, of men and women are established, there can be no fear of agricultural depression, and this is what the Women's Institutes have prevented.

Let us now see how they achieve still more by means of co-operation. Although a fee is paid to Branch Secretaries by the Department of Agriculture and it also supplies stationery, literature, lectures, and gives some financial assistance, it appears to leave considerable freedom of action to members. A few rules and regulations exist, but red tape does not prevent individual development and scope for invention. Thus each village or small town community can spend the accumulated subscriptions of its members upon anything that will add to the general welfare of the neighbourhood. Some may commence with a room or building to be used for meetings, not only those held for the Women's Institute, but others as well. Whatever is paid by other societies for the hire of this room goes towards future purchases of chairs, tables, books, or newspapers, a piano, or any other things that will make it a comfortable Club for women. We read of a Hall and four adjoining rooms having been rented, and it was possible also with the subscriptions, which it must be remembered come from rich and poor alike, to arrange for a woman to act as Matron. She lived on the premises and was able to see to the lighting and keep it comfort-

able and warm for the use of members. On weekdays it was open from 9 a.m. until 10.30 p.m. and on Sundays for a shorter time. Each member was asked to contribute one piece of furniture, and so gradually it was made home-like, and rugs, pictures, a writing-desk, sewing machine, piano, and many other things were procured. People in larger houses sent their papers down in the afternoon and other literature was provided by Government.

One of the problems of country life is how to keep young people amused, and a Village Hall is a great help in making them satisfied with their quiet surroundings. Concerts can be given, old folk-songs revived ; then, too, demonstration lectures upon Food Values, Cooking, and Sewing are so easily arranged for if there is a room available. In England we are only now commencing this work of instruction in Domestic Science, and until we can teach people to help themselves and inspire women with a wish to make a real study, in short a profession of housekeeping, we shall continue to have that dearth of good plain cooks, which becomes increasingly noticeable each year. Lady Chance, the principal organiser of the National Food Economy League, a society which was started in London at the outbreak of war, has been endeavouring to remedy this. She is publishing admirable booklets to be obtained for 1*d.* each, in which are given recipes for simple dishes, suggestions for utilising vegetables, and hints as to how waste can be avoided. If this society had for its support some local organisations similar to the Women's Institutes, it would make rapid progress, but often

those who have been anxious to make use of its instructors and have demonstrations are prevented by lack of suitable village accommodation.

Whenever information which bears upon the practical side of life can be supplied it is so helpful ; for it means that the last and best word of experts is brought within reach of humble cottagers. We know that in farming and gardening if the best methods and the latest theories are followed there is a gain of increased production, a greater yield of wheat, or a larger supply of livestock. Precisely in the same way does it help women in their housekeeping if they are directed as to labour-saving methods, and have information as to food values, rules of health, and the comparative values of wearing apparel brought clearly to their knowledge. This need not be done in a dull, dry way, but if the lecturers are well selected and add a spice of fun or humour to what they say, many will be glad, after a long day's work, to walk across the village street or even come from distant farms, through moonlit fields, to sit in a warm, bright Village Hall and join in the interest of discussion. Those women of our upper classes who spend perhaps only week-ends in the country, or who pass but a few months in a large house which they frequent only during a fixed time of year for hunting or shooting, hardly realise the loneliness of life on a farm or in a cottage. The farmer and the working man have interests outside the home, they have friends within walking distance with whom they can smoke a pipe, or a village club where they can read the papers after work-hours, but for womenfolk no amusements are provided.

Upon them falls the daily task, which often from its sameness grows monotonous, of preparing food and cooking it; then there is jam-making, perhaps bread-baking, and the weekly wash-day. But is there any fun to be had without going as far as the neighbouring town to see the Cinema? Is there much beyond Sunday's sermon from the pulpit to give food for thought of things beyond the parish boundary line? There is nothing specially offered for the relaxation of these women, and it is because of this that so many young girls prefer to leave their homes and gain a wider outlook in towns, whilst following after them goes a devoted swain, Harry the ploughman or Bill the carpenter, and so the countryside becomes depleted of its men and women.

It is most natural that those who live surrounded by luxuries such as electric light, telephones, carriages and motors, who have easy means of access to the best plays, concerts, and dances, who have, brought to their doors, all the latest ideas on music, literature, and science, do not understand the stagnation, the dreariness of country life when all these means of communication are wanting, when the farmer's wife cannot even take her share in the affairs of the county or in educational matters. It is this social side, a personal element far removed from politics or pettiness of party gains that the women of Canada have helped so much. They know that a single unit can accomplish but little, so by means of co-ordinated work, the combined assistance of all towards some one specific object, they accomplish things that cause surprise by their importance. Sometimes a village President gives

a tea-party to show off the beauties of her garden and, a small entrance fee being charged to all who attend, it is possible to collect money to help an invalid child ; or if local benefits are desirable, then a swimming-bath and dressing-rooms are built, or a sewing contest for girls with prizes is organised, a public library is started, or village singing classes, under a choral leader, to stimulate an interest in music, are undertaken. These are only a few of many ideas that we read of as having been successfully carried out by means of co-operative effort. One very favourite form of contribution towards the life of the community is a public garden, planted with trees, gay with flowerbeds and having shadowy, sheltered nooks for seats, children's playgrounds, and tables and chairs for picnic parties.

I am told that wonderful moral forces have been brought out by this unity of rich and poor, old and young women, people of all beliefs and ideas. Petty jealousy has vanished, narrowness of thought and severity of judgment have disappeared, and charitable, broadminded views are disseminated. Much depends upon the selection of office-bearers, and of course the choice of a suitable president is particularly important. She must, amongst other qualities, possess that one essential of those who guide others, the power by which the best that is in each worker is not only discovered, but also increased. Only a limited number of women are ready for leadership, partly because they, unlike men, have not had the advantage of centuries of past leaders whose traditions have been transmitted to modern days. There is another reason,

though, for scarcity amongst leaders, and it is that such a position calls always for self-sacrifice, patriotism, and absolute devotion to others. There must be no pushing forward of self, all consideration has to be reserved for developing the cleverness, talent, or goodness in others. This means solitude to a certain degree and, as most people prefer the ease with which they can go forward with the crowd, taking only a path that has been cleared for them, there are not many leaders.

When the right President has been found her first consideration, after she has appointed a working staff, will be to give each member of it some one work to direct. It is only by allowing workers responsibility, subservient always to a broad degree of discipline, that an interest in their special departments is created and maintained. In this way all activity will become both pleasant and profitable, as each member knows that she is answerable for the success of her special undertaking, and puts the whole strength of her ability into her work.

In Canada, where social conditions are simpler than with us, it has been found advisable to bear in mind, in selecting office-bearers, that no one must be chosen because she is Mrs. So-and-So, but solely upon her own merits. It is only because she is clever or possesses energy or qualities of tactfulness that she is asked to help officially. In this way no distinction of class or creed is permitted and consequently all friction or trivial discussion is unheard of.

When women's meetings are first introduced into a village or small community it is difficult some-

times to draw out the talent or personality which most assuredly lies hidden in each member. For this object a roll-call is used and printed on the programmes and gives an opportunity for each member, however shy or bashful she may be, to join in the meeting. Each is expected to respond either with a verse of poetry, a recipe, or kitchen hint as the case may be. In this way those who are retiring and perhaps over-modest are encouraged to express their opinions.

Another important development which owes its progress to Women's Institute meetings is the interest taken in agricultural and other local and home industries for women. Canada has for many years been aptly called " the bread basket " of the British Empire, and in order to retain this reputation must this year augment her efforts for increased food-production. Not only must she feed her own people and us, but she has also to provide for those at the front. Her women enter with energy into all business transactions of the men, and consequently the wives of landowners, farmers, growers, and producers follow each step that is now being taken vigorously to add to the yield of the land. They know the full value of co-operation in agriculture and appreciate much more than we do in England the assistance that it gives to growers. In one of the Institutes women recently availed themselves of the generosity of the farmers who allowed them to pick up all windfall apples in their orchards. At one of the old-fashioned " paring bee " meetings the apples were peeled and the result was that in one evening fifteen bushels were

ready to be dried. The manager of a neighbouring fruit factory generously offered to dry the fruit, and, given this incentive, the women managed in six evenings to have six hundred bushels, which when dry were sent to the Belgians. This is a proof of what co-ordinated workers can do.

The above is only a brief outline of the valuable progress that is being made across the waters in making country life assume the high position which it should take in every country and which women can effect so materially. Much of what I have described, and a great deal more besides, was told us in a lecture by a charming Canadian lady, and the moral of what she imparted is perhaps best found in the words of our King, who said, "The strength of the Empire lies in the homes of her people."

My students sat entranced whilst these fresh inspirations were scattered before them, for they felt not only that they were wanted for manual work, to grow supplies of flowers, fruit, and vegetables, but also that still higher motives were to guide their efforts. By studying these fresh ideas, making them known throughout England, and perhaps assisting to form Women's Institutes, it was within their power to help to establish people happily on the land and prevent urban interests from gaining too great an ascendancy over rural ones. A representative of the Agricultural Organisation Society, who came with Mrs. Watt to introduce this honoured guest to us, summed up what was expected of them by saying, "We want each one of you, even if for a time it may be only in a small

way, to act as a shining beacon lamp to guide the less well informed towards all these high national aims." Such is the power of inspiration that I feel sure each young woman bears this simile still in mind and will not rest until she too has done " her bit."

CHAPTER XI

TRENCH GARDENS

When village lads and lasses search for violets amongst the moss-grown banks of narrow country lanes, we know that spring has really come at last. It is a late one this year in spite of false hopes that were raised in the earliest months, and the pear blossom that promised to be out before its usual time has had an unkind setback owing to the blustering, cold east wind that swept over it. A smock-frocked shepherd was amongst the first to draw my attention to the injury that apparently had been done to the fruit blossoms. He told me that his window overlooked a neighbour's garden, and how each morning it was a pleasure to him to watch the flowers expand, until one day the petals suddenly turned brown and he knew that frost had come and hurt them.

Whilst talking with him I thought I would ask the origin of curious marks that abound upon a slope of the downs facing south. Raised banks in the shape of squares and oblongs are symmetrically arranged upon the steep hill-side and in the centre and at either end are two narrow banks that run down side by side into the deep valley below, reminding one much of the narrow roadways that

separate Italian vineyards. The site has evidently been chosen with a view to avoiding as much as possible the onslaught of the south-west or prevailing wind, and this has been aimed at even more than the attainment of the full force of the midday sun, from which it may be concluded that these terraces were laid out by those who were accustomed to the excessive sun-heat of a southern land.

The old shepherd knew all about the raised earthworks and said that in a very old book that his grandmother had shown him they were described as the earliest gardens of the community. " Some do say as how the tracks that run down in their midst were used for cattle, and close round yonder bend of hill you will see where they lead to, and some do say that it be the place where the Romans, they do tell, kept their beasts fenced in at night time." The pronunciation of the word " beastie " would alone betray my friend to be a true Sussex man and recalls the Middle Ages in the way in which the " Kynges Beasties " at Hampton Court were written and no doubt spoken of.

It is only on Downland that we find the lasting remains of human work that existed long ago. There are no such traces to be discovered in country where woods abound, because falling leaves and decaying wood conceal to a great extent what early man built up for his defence or for his bodily nourishment. Ploughed land, with its freshly turned sods, does away with old landmarks, and down in the hollows rushing streams, river-beds, and drifting sand may completely change the undulations of a country. But that which has once

been excavated and shaped upon the downs even in those earliest days of all, when fear of wolves was greater than the fear of other men, remains to us who come long after. Here short, dense turf quickly spreads over each raised barrier of earth, over the level platforms that were built for men to stand on and hurl projectiles down upon the bodies of rapacious animals, over the raised walks where Roman sentries paced at night, and above the hollows and cup-like forms that alone remain to show where in those days of long ago dew-ponds provided water. "Shepherds' steps" are what the platforms now are called, and indeed they form snug resting-places whence those solitary, silent men can look down upon their flocks as they graze below.

During the anxious dark nights that all grow accustomed to just now, when the wind drops and maybe foreign aircraft hover hawklike above our heads, it is well for active bands of newly-trained soldiers to grow familiar with each good hiding-place. I became suddenly aware of this, whilst walking one afternoon along a level space near the highest part of Mount Caburn. I had passed the spot where the Fairy Rings, with their half-moons of dark tufted grass, always attract attention, and was looking towards a gap in a distant line of hills, through which the sea with its fishing boats and the smoke of steamers can be seen, when suddenly I perceived five khaki soldier hats above the edge of the deep turf-covered dyke that surrounds the old British fort. My first instinct was to walk on without appearing to notice, for I suspected some

surprise designed by young soldiers who had walked out for pleasure from a neighbouring camp. A sharp " Halt ! " suddenly resounded and still I took no notice. A sharper, fiercer " Halt ! " brought me speedily to a standstill, and when I saw one of the five standing up on the wall of the dyke with his rifle levelled at my head, I knew that I was face to face with martial law. At the same time I felt inclined to show that I was in no sense taken aback and so I asked if it was " a game they were playing or real earnest." The young soldier was tempted to fire his rifle, but a sergeant who rose from the ditch murmured something about " only a lady " and with a wave of his arm motioned me to move on, which I lost no time in doing. I had almost forgotten the incident when another resounding " Halt ! " rang through the air and a tall man in khaki asked, " What business have you on this hill ? " He looked fiercely at me and I saw that his rifle was ready to hand if I took another step without answering.

" I am only taking a walk," I said, and feeling somewhat annoyed at such an innocent amusement being so much interfered with I added in an undertone, " I have as much business here as you have." The young man's face suddenly relaxed and a broad smile followed. " Pass on," he said, and I felt quite pleased, as I swung down the hill, that I had furnished them with a slight incident to talk over and that their monotonous watch upon the summit of the beacon had at all events been broken by the advent of one imaginary foe.

We civilians soon became callous of these doings

of the new Army, and when in the dusk of evening small bands of khaki-clad men, headed by a young officer, alight from the evening train and steal towards some hiding-place, we hardly take note of them. Laden with rolls of clothing or blankets, swinging hurricane lanterns in their hands, they march off briskly into the darkness. Again the old haunts of ancient man are guarded and sentries keep watch along the same worn tracks, but this time the enemy is looked for in the sky and not upon the earth. There is less fear but far more bitter hatred in the hearts of those who now stand waiting, hidden within the walls of chalk-pits or where dark pines form an impenetrable hiding-place, whence a great expanse of landscape and sky can be scanned.

Sometimes, for the sake of military experience, teaching that is useful alike to the civilian and soldier, the village street is blocked by a large farm wagon and "Halt!" re-echoes across the hill as some timid inhabitant is suddenly brought to a stand-still and reluctantly submits himself to being cross-questioned.

It was easier perhaps in the winter months to realise how close war lies to us—Nature was sleeping then, there was nothing to take attention away from all the new impressions, the sound of many feet marching along the road, the voices singing "It's a long way," the horses galloping by, the click of spurs, all the things that will be for ever interwoven with our recollection of this year and of those who were fighting heavy rains and sweeping winds in the trenches in France. Now, however,

whilst we who live near camps have become accustomed to lines of white canvas tents or wooden huts with the Union Jack flying above them, whilst the novelty of having railways guarded by soldiers has worn off, and no longer are we surprised when the rainbow-hued airship floats silently round upon its mission of investigation, the tension of past weeks has become suddenly relaxed.

Is it wrong that it should be so?

Those who live in towns can gain no such relief. With them occupation and feverish activity come to the rescue; without these they could hardly tolerate the daily, hourly news-headings that take away from restfulness. A gardener's life is a different one, and so all-absorbing is it that, to some, it might almost appear as if it encouraged selfishness or a lack of keen interest in other people's concerns; yet in reality it represents from early dawn to late at night the studied devotion to the requirements of plants. There is but little time left for consideration of personal matters, and for this reason it is such a wonderfully stimulating life for highly strung, nervous people, because it combines activity with calming influences. They have no time in which to think of their own weaknesses or ailments.

So for one brief afternoon let us allow the possibility of *joie de vivre* to enter again into our hearts as it was wont to do each spring before the Great War wearied with its battering guns, its sorrow and desolation.

I think only those who have been gardeners in the true, active sense, doing hard winter's work, can fully appreciate and value the joyfulness that re-

returns after dark, cold days of early rising, when breakfast is eaten by dim lamp-light and the agony of cold fingers has to be endured in the daytime and combated too at night, whilst penetrating winds and sometimes snow are faced on the way to the stoke-hole.

It is a hard life certainly if weather is thought about or when luxuries such as a big hot bath, soft bed, heavily-curtained rooms, and artistic surroundings are desired; but there are compensations that amply repay, to my mind, the lack of these comparatively trivial comforts. Does not freedom make up for many disagreeables? Will not many a governess or resident secretary be envious of a profession that represents to a considerable degree the delight of being one's own master? Then, too, the joy of feeling close to Nature and knowing that flowers and plants, beautiful and helpless things, are solely dependent upon those who tend them, is worth much. The gratitude, too, that they most surely evince for those who care for them is reward in itself for the hardships of "roughing it" in a cottage.

Thus it is more especially to those who have combated and not sat at ease that spring comes with its perfect reawakening after expectant days, when once again the distant woodland turns to a faint rose-colour, proving as it deepens each hour that small buds are swelling ready to burst open upon a warm, sunny day. Then there is the coo of the wood-pigeon to listen for amongst sheltering pine trees, the place the cuckoo first haunts, and the advent of the swallow to watch for; but the greatest

happiness of all is to see the fulfilment of winter work in the spring garden.

Our hill-side one always recalls lightness and froth such as a sheet of water gives as it falls over some height of rock, when spray and foam are added to the pale blue-green of the water. The orchard outskirts of the flower-garden are pure white, for pears and plums seem to have forgotten the frost danger that passed so close to them a short while back or, maybe, as they are on high ground, it did not reach them, and now they carry large blossom. The terraces nearer to the pleasure-garden, against the banks of which are all kinds of rather tender flowering shrubs like choisya, kerryia, and myrtle, are carpeted with arabis. We have the dwarf and the tall erect, double kind, and their great, matlike, spreading foliage clumps retain moisture beneath and instead of robbing all goodness from the ground benefit it by keeping it cool and damp. The youngest apple trees, planted irregularly on these terraces, will soon be out in flower, thus adding to the light, frothy appearance. It is however in the heart of the flower-garden, upon the two raised banks of the herbaceous borders that descend from the house to the brooks below, that soft dream colours merge one into the other and white is in abeyance.

The best time to judge of it is soon after sunrise, or at the end of a warm afternoon, and when colours are not crude or harsh, for then golden yellow alyssum melts into pure blue myosotis, that sky-blue of southern countries, which a chalk soil alone can give. Here and there a touch of pink and white from old-fashioned bachelor's

buttons gives a change to the light blue carpet, and pink and mauve aubrietia, side by side, have the effect of making a shot-silk groundwork.

We do not merely have these dwarf spring flowers in the front of the borders, but they are also dispersed all over them, and only where massive shrubs like buddleia or ribes intervene, where a dense clump of periwinkle or a bed of violets comes, is there a cessation of the spring flowering carpet. Being in irregular-shaped patches all the way down it, they make an effective show. When summer comes and their best days are over it is easy enough to restrict their growth and take away some of the biggest clumps that might interfere with summer plants, which meanwhile have been sleeping peacefully in the cool moisture that they gave. We have no bulbs interspersed in the borders, because students, who ceaselessly come and go as they complete their course of training, might carelessly injure them in hoeing and weeding amongst the large clumps of herbaceous stuff. So the bulbs are left to take care of themselves in the wilder parts of the garden on the terraces, and when they have been gently forced in the houses for winter decoration, are planted out in great masses to come up as they choose between the arabis and violets. Thus we have a waving, golden ribbon of daffodils down the sides of the garden, and here and there a stately orange-coloured frittilaria waits to be admired and to show the glistening tears that are to be found by those who search within its pendent flowers.

Primroses, daffodils, wallflowers, all have come

SWEET-PEAS.

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together at the same moment this year, and, although cold nights have retarded them and made the suspense of waiting rather tantalising, yet we have benefited by having, condensed into a few very perfect days, the pleasures that belong usually to many weeks. Spring, this year, reminds one of what occurs habitually in Italy when the rigour of winter holds back expansion, and then suddenly tulips, roses, lilies flock into being side by side.

Each year, new ornamental gardens are made in order to show how easily designs can be evolved, and the latest addition is a "trench garden" which, in its present austerity, seeks to recall the passer-by from happy dreams of spring in heaven to the war-reality of the moment.

Upon a high, wide bank facing south are planted rosy-pink-flowering currant bushes. They stand as if protecting and watching over a small, brick-floored, level garden below, in the centre of which is an oblong tank where water-lilies grow. Their shining leaves, floating above the water, are the sun-warmed sleeping-place of friendly frogs, who rest there until evening comes and then hop busily round the garden to the great delight of Timothy, the fox terrier.

For some time past I have been in search of an overshadowed nook into which I could steal for quiet thought and work, far removed from the voices of gardeners. The ideal spot that I had in mind was one surrounded by activity, but from which no movement could be seen. It is never disturbing to hear in the distance the regularity of sound that comes from the use of a spade or pick ;

on the contrary, when it is wafted on the wind, a degree of restfulness comes with it. I therefore chose a space in the shrubbery, north of where the ribes are, and one of the stalwart lime-pit men, having cleared away all trees and shrubs, began to hew out of the chalk a cavity some five feet deep and twelve feet square. The first thing he did was to remove all good surface soil and stack it upon one side ready for future use. There was not much of it, for a chalky subsoil is soon reached, and when he began to pick out the rock steadily bit by bit, it was thrown up to form a high bank upon the east side, where a draught of wind sometimes penetrates through the trees. As he got down deeper, and at last his head alone appeared above the surrounding banks, the chalk became harder, tougher to handle, and by that time quite a high slope, similar in outline to Mont Blanc, had been made with all that his spade had extracted from the bottom of the trench. I was able to form as it were pockets in this by collecting the biggest chalk stones and building them up to make small retaining walls for good soil. It is interesting work; for the stones must be laid carefully so that they form no pattern or artificial-looking arrangement, and a group of pockets should lead to one large one, and then a series of smaller ones on a higher level make the whole appear well-balanced.

From all the different rubbish-heaps in the garden it was possible to collect in trugs tempting mixtures of decayed leaf-mould, ashes, and manure, and these were put in layers within the pockets of

this miniature chalk Alp ; for that is what the mound resembled when it was completed. Slowly the whole became a dark-looking bed of rich soil, and only at the summit was chalk purposely left exposed, in order to carry out more effectively the idea of a snow-peaked mountain. As the sun shines fiercely upon this bank during the day, it will be possible in time to establish all kinds of dwarf Alpines upon it, and by merging one group into another and choosing only miniature flowers, an interesting garden can be made. Meanwhile, until the soil becomes firmly settled it is advisable only to attempt, for this summer, more ordinary plants, and so gourds will hang down amidst perhaps a mass of canary creeper, whilst wallflowers, and later on nasturtiums, give a stronger depth of yellow, brown, and orange. Little baby cactus plants in those bright red pots that children love to handle are arranged in groups, where they give an effect of tropical growth, and make the whole look like a child's plaything.

Within the trench garden, the walls of chalk are already clothed by honeysuckle, jasmine, and wild clematis, all of which were lifted carefully from ground which was somewhat poor and will therefore now, with the help of good earth, welcome the change and grow freely. The floor was not made absolutely level, but was given a small inclination to fall towards one corner so as to ensure its becoming quickly dry after heavy thunder showers. Big slabs of York stone-paving were placed upon it, but sufficient space was left between each for Alpine pinks, saxifrages, sedums, and pansies to

find a home. In short, this small garden, so simple to construct, is one that should commend itself to those who live in exposed positions where wind is a disturbing element. A few steps hewn out of the chalk lead down to it, and there is room for two chairs and a table, so that it forms an ideal stronghold for those who search for undisturbed peace.

We have two other " trench gardens," but these were laid out long before the war began ; one, long and narrow, measuring about fourteen feet in width by seventy feet in length, was thought of when we wanted to give a home to twelve clipped bay trees. I was fortunate enough to see these on the morning they arrived from Holland, as they stood on the pavement in a street near Covent Garden Market, and I thought they would do admirably in some large Italian orange-pots that we had in the garden. In height and shape they resemble orange trees, and, as they are placed formally in pairs to outline the two longest sides of this garden, have often deceived experts, who thought that, by some magic, the terra-cotta pots and orange trees had all been brought from Italy. Small birds find convenient, dense shelter within the close foliage, and in the recesses of the chalk-banks, hidden behind passion-flowers and Jersey Beauty rose, small tits build nests that only sharp-eyed boys and girls discover. This garden is a very sheltered, shady one, for the chalk rock that was hewn from one side, in order to make the level grass-walk upon which the great orange-pots stand, was heaped up to the south higher even

than the tops of the bay trees, so as to give protection from the sun, and to make it yet higher, and to prevent strong sunlight from penetrating too fiercely, a copper-beech hedge was planted on the top. This hedge is round three sides of the garden and is kept clipped so that the whole effect is a long, narrow, formal *tapis vert* guiding the eye by means of the bay trees and the beech hedge to a seat at the far end.

Favourite, tender plants grow with luxuriance against the earth walls of this garden, for the orange-pots act as wind-breaks and so myrtles, *Romneya Coulteri*, a Marshal Neil rose, and a vine all flourish near them.

The third trench garden is the home of peach trees and is purely utilitarian and not intended for ornament. In laying out a piece of ground which goes by the name of the " well garden," we were obliged to excavate chalk from a hole near by. Gradually the hole increased in size until it became about fifty feet long by fourteen feet wide, and I decided, as work progressed and it grew deeper and deeper, that if the sides were made to form walls about seven feet high they would be ideal for trained fruit trees. Long, tall pieces of wooden square-mesh trellis were fixed to project about a foot in front of the earth walls, and against this the trees were planted, so that their branches could extend along it and be tied to it. Where the sun falls most we planted peach trees, and at the two ends are pears, whilst the wall facing north will eventually be utilised for Morella cherries. It has answered its purpose well ; the

peaches have been richly coloured and have ripened, so that I can recommend such a garden strongly to those who have not much wall space for trained fruit trees, and do not wish to go to the heavy expense of building them.

This short survey of that which does not belong to the market-garden pure and simple and recalls the bright, happy side of gardening, indulged in during peace-time, may be pardonable even now, whilst the sound of cannon-fire comes to us across the sea from Flanders. It is good to relax for a brief space, and then those of us who cannot fight must pursue with renewed vigour, united energy, and steadfastness, work which may eventually prove to be as urgently needed as munition-making. We know that the great army of our foe has been so organised that men were granted a fortnight's leave at harvest time, during which they could return to their homes in detachments and help to gather in the food supplies. News comes to us of their large potato harvest, of many tons not required for people being given to their horses, and the bands of active women, belonging to different spheres of life, who are growing vegetables to supply the German people.

As a fruit expert remarked, when he saw our trench peach garden, " Necessity is the mother of invention " ; so, no doubt, what each fighting nation finds itself forced to do now will teach resourcefulness, and we, like others who have learned this lesson earlier, shall follow suit and organise the growth of food supplies, devoting only a brief space to the joys of the spring flower garden.

CHAPTER XII

EARLY SUMMER

Hours of work in the garden alter as days gain in length, and there is so much in early summer that calls for extra output of energy that one of the staff is usually at work soon after five in the morning. She has taken the place of our foreman of the vegetable department, because he, being a strong, active young fellow, was amongst the first to enlist when war commenced, and although she cannot be said to equal him in muscular strength, yet she brings thought and intelligence to bear upon the treatment of plants and has made a real success of the work entrusted to her.

So whilst young sparrows and thrushes are calling out from their nests for food and the garden is yet the work and playground not of human beings but of animals, she goes about many tasks that have to be done when dew is still upon the plants. For instance, rows of slender young onions, just pushing through the ground, are best weeded then, for they can be more easily seen ; soot, too, should be applied to crops when they are damp, before the sun's rays are on them, and it is a good opportunity, when students with their often tiresome

and disturbing questionings are not present, to examine the condition of each crop.

She passes on, therefore, from one row of peas to another, ascertaining whether mice have been at work, and, if so, resetting the little traps with tempting bits of cheese, finding out which crops are in need of hoeing, what vegetables are ready for picking, and she makes lists of those to whom the different things are to be sent.

By the time the students arrive at 7 a.m. when the big bell sounds, she is ready to give necessary orders about picking and packing. Although the young gardeners are not expected to come before the appointed hour, they often voluntarily begin work previously, so as to snatch an opportunity of looking after their own individual flower-gardens, which each is proud to possess during her sojourn with us. This is a spirit which it is encouraging to see ; it proclaims that there are no " slackers " amongst the community and that a real love of work stimulates them in the hours that they devote to their training.

Having mapped out upon separate sheets of paper or bill-heads the various requirements of private customers, the young forewoman directs her gang of workers as to which frames will yield lettuces that are in good condition, and which rows of beans are ready for picking, neither too old nor yet too young ; then, having started all at their several tasks, she is able to go off to breakfast.

They, meanwhile, collect the different groups of vegetables in small heaps upon the table of the

packing shed, and arrange them in their order as they are required by each customer. So interested do the packers become in the ladies who buy weekly hampers of vegetables that I often overhear the remark, " You must not give Mrs. So-and-So beetroot, she can't bear it," or " Mrs. B—— will want her favourite lettuces, they have a large party in the house," which would lead the casual listener to think that both these ladies were personal friends. This secret knowledge of the preferences of people whom they have never spoken to is to be found in the pages of a small book, which has, inscribed upon it in large letters, " Customers' Likes and Dislikes," and whenever a letter comes, in which these particulars are sent, the details are copied into this invaluable alphabetical record.

The packing shed is, indeed, a scene of busy work during the morning, whilst three or four students who have been temporarily attached to this department for some months' training are picking, sorting, grading, wrapping vegetables in gay-coloured tissue paper, preparing fruit punnets, and finally skilfully laying layers of vegetables, according to their weight and size, in the light " basses " that we use for the purpose. A long needle with string sews this bag so firmly together that the contents cannot be shaken, however much rough handling it may be subjected to during the journey by rail.

When all parcels have been labelled, addressed, and entered in the books by the officer in charge, who stands writing at a desk or a raised wooden

platform, it is time to take the trolly laden with these innumerable parcels to the station. This work, during war-time, is usually undertaken by two young women, but in days of long-awaited progress, which we hope lie close before us, a smart motor-van, driven by a woman-gardener, will convey the produce to the customers' homes. This is the reward for strenuous labour which seems within measurable possibility of attainment, and by getting thus in touch with the consumer, we hope to show others how beneficial, both to those who grow vegetables and those who buy and eat them, this direct business transaction can become. Only a few hours will then elapse between the moment when a bundle of asparagus leaves the gardener's hands and is made ready in the kitchen for the guests' dinner.

A morning's work is never considered to be properly completed until all disorder and untidiness, resulting from hurried work, has been made good, and here I may say that it is noticeable that women succeed better than men in the important matter of orderliness. They do not usually display this quality at first, but after they have worked under a strict disciplinarian they readily acquire it. This is not only seen in the precision with which all waste material is either collected; if good enough to be used again, or at once banished to the rubbish-heap, but also in the case of spades, hoes, and other tools, which women, although new to the work, take pride in keeping in good order. Brightly polished spades and trowels, bearing a number which marks ownership stamped

upon each handle, hang glistening in the sunlight as if some army expert accustomed to cleaning military accoutrements had polished them. It is not because they are seldom used that they look so clean, for our gardeners are forced to work hard, but because the tool-house is under the supervision of an elder student and she shows signs of disapproval if others omit to clean their tools after use.

In the storeroom raffia, string, mowing-machine oil, wood-wool, all the necessaries in short of a garden, have each their appointed place and usually the name of the article is printed in large letters on the shelf below, so that even a novice could find where each thing is, were she permitted by the stern monitor in charge to poke an inquiring nose within the carefully guarded precincts. Another essentially feminine feature is that each department is kept decorated with a freshly-picked bunch of flowers. Welcome rest comes between eleven and two o'clock and then work in the outdoor garden is resumed until four o'clock, when the big bell sounds once more for all to assemble and tidy their tools before they separate for tea. When summer heat increases and watering has to be done in the cool of the evening, they return again for necessary work after an hour's interval, but so active and energetic are the majority that they enjoy doing voluntary work until darkness overtakes them and they are forced to go home to a late supper.

Busy days slip by in this way, more students come as the patriotic call for women goes forth

through the land, and the staff of lecturing market-gardeners grows more and more critical as crops need thinning and ground has yet to be prepared for sowing. In spite of strenuous activity it is a happy, joyous life, and few who have once tasted its pleasures would willingly change it for any other. More especially is this the case now, for at length, after many years of uphill striving, when it seemed that none would believe in women's work and it was difficult to get the right type of girl to join the profession, a great thing has happened which will once and for all establish women as farmers and gardeners. Her Majesty the Queen has had brought to her notice the work that women are doing in cultivating land, and with that gracious approval which she is wont to show to women-workers, has visited several of their training centres. We, amongst other colleges, have received a gift from part of that sum which the wives of Freemasons presented to Her Majesty for distribution, and not only do I value this as a mark of approval of what is being done here, but I also recognise that the interest thus shown by the Queen will help more than anything else to widen the scope of work that all women-gardeners will do in the future.

This sense of appreciation in others has oft-times seemed wanting in past years, and the lack of it has dulled sometimes the spirit with which work on the land has been undertaken ; for when carried on with true earnestness of purpose, without thought of pleasure or profit, it is but natural that there should be a desire for the support and

consideration of those in authority. At length a general acknowledgment of the usefulness of women-gardeners has come; but now, to make our work complete, we want more recruits for the profession, who, above all, should belong to the upper classes and possess some capital. Even if it be but £50 or £100 a year, it is helpful, because the expenses of training have to be achieved, and when these are paid for, the woman who has even a small sum to fall back upon can be promised a far more prosperous, independent career upon her reaching an age when the desire of owning land and working for herself, instead of for others, possesses her.

In the hope, therefore, of making known to town-dwellers how much we want the daughters of Army and Navy officers to fill the splendid posts we have ready for them the moment they are equipped with knowledge, it is decided that we should take a stall at the Chelsea Flower Show. This will be an opportunity for showing what women can grow, how they arrange a stall, and, above all, what women-gardeners look like when they are not working in a garden. This latter point is one that always arouses interest, for people have a suspicion that hob-nail boots and aviation skirts are inseparable from those who are usually at work amongst crops of vegetables. They find their surmises are wrong, however; for plain straw hats and khaki-coloured coats and skirts of an ordinary shape for town wear are what the students are seen in when they spend a day in London or go to visit other people's gardens.

Preparations for the flower show have gone on for many weeks, and with some depression I am told that the pots of tall sweet-peas that were intended for our stall will not be ready quite in time. However, there must be plenty of other flowers and vegetables, to judge by the vigorous " potting on " and continual " seed sowing " that has been in progress throughout past weeks.

Our " College Draughtsman," too, has been kept busy, for upon her has fallen the responsibility of painting a proper background for the stall, whereby all can be shown off to advantage. I sometimes suspect that her family and friends rather dread the advent of these college exhibitions ! The estate carpenter, a burly, usually immovable Sussex man, becomes, by means of persuasion, so active in our cause that broken gates in need of repair, doors that have dropped and won't shut, are all put upon one side whilst our requirements are attended to. In the picturesque surroundings of the wood-yard, beneath tall elm trees, planks are sawn in readiness for the supporting framework at the flower stall. This, however, is only the commencement, for pots of paint in red, white, and blue colours are freely used to decorate the fantastic eighteenth-century style of ornament with which it is made gay. All this activity is supposed to be carried on in secret, and much connected with the work lies hidden within a dusty loft high up in the clock tower, a veritable paradise of artistic disorder and untidiness. The days pass by and we draw nearer to the eventful one ; hence, through lack of time,

the secret leaks out and it becomes a question of requisitioning many hands, from kind-hearted " Nannie " downwards, to carry on the busy work. Here is stitching to be done where the wide canvas border stretches across the top; then the little Pompadour-dressed lady, carved in wood, who presides upon the board above, has to be painted and legs of wooden pedestals, upon which vases of flowers are to stand, must be hurriedly shortened. Many are drawn into the circle of helpers, and their smiling faces certainly belie the suppressed groans over their own good nature that are suspected by those who are not intimately connected with the work.

When all is completed and the paint has dried, a heavily-laden van transports the material along sixteen miles of winding country lanes that separate us from the draughtsman's home. As each new trophy is lifted on to the garden path the eyes of the youngest students glisten with childish excitement and delight at the prospect of arranging it all at the London flower show.

Our village friends are also drawn into these interests, for many of them, including the laundress and her sister, both ardent gardeners and supporters of women's work, are bidden to a private view of the flowers that have been made ready for exhibition.

Picking is done some days beforehand, when blooms are at their best, in order to preserve those out-of-doors ones from rain or rough weather that might do damage before the great day arrives. Within the fruit-room, through the thick chalk walls of which hardly a glimmer of light pene-

trates, beneath staging which is draped with green tissue-paper hangings, stand pails of water in readiness to receive the flowers. In these are plunged long-stemmed May-flowering tulips, parrot tulips of many colours, erect white Madonna lilies and carnations grown from our own cuttings, and softly the tissue paper is raised to allow our friends to obtain a glimpse of all the festive, brilliant colour. "I often wish I could have been a gardener," says the laundress regretfully, and certainly her own plants prove by their appearance what a good home she gives them.

The day of preparation dawns and we have been kindly treated, for a soft, fresh wind without intense heat is there to give courage to workers. At four in the morning the garden is full of silent, busy young women, each performing her allotted task of packing, and by seven o'clock the first detachment marches off, carrying heavy hampers, boxes, and paper parcels to the station to catch an early train. Other more important officials go up later, and when, in the afternoon, I find my way to Chelsea and visit our stall, it is evident that hammer and nails have been at work, to say nothing of the hands that have been busy arranging sprays of flowers in the vases that they may look their best. The whole effect seems good, and, although we cannot this year expend effort upon ornamental garden-design work, it is possible by arranging radishes, lettuces, and other vegetables among the flowers to give some idea of what women can do to increase these supplies. As I wander round looking at all the colour and

beauty, shown off so admirably against a soft green carpet of turf beneath the great tents, I overhear comments on my gardeners. On the whole they are favourable and what pleases me most is that several nurserymen who have been surreptitiously watching them arrange their stall tell me that they now have formed a high opinion of the practical, workmanlike manner in which ladies carry out their business. These remarks, coupled with the fact that the College receives a bronze " Flora " medal from the R.H.S. as a mark of approval for the produce shown, make up to the Principal and her staff for tiring hours spent in the stifling atmosphere of a tent, and answering innumerable questions, frequently asked by those who know nothing about flowers or vegetables, and who require elaborate details as to their cultivation.

These days, when quiet regularity of work is left behind, and gardeners, coming in contact with other growers, can discuss new methods and see the best achievements brought about by hybridisation and cross-fertilisation, are inspiring and of deep interest to those who are ambitious and wish to succeed in their profession. The life of the students, if they are loyal to their teachers, is apt to become self-centred and they are inclined to think that their staff alone is skilled, so that the competition with other schools which a large London exhibition brings about is a very essential part of their education. There are so many details, tricks of the trade one might almost call them, connected with preparing produce for a show,

arranging a stall, and, above all, maintaining its condition during three or four days when heat, dust, and inquiring customers combine to disturb the artistic effect, and all these have to be learnt. There is time, though, for some amusement, and in the evenings, when attendance is not required, the stall is left and some of the party go to the Coliseum, where they get fresh ideas for new chorus songs and dances, so dear to the hearts of young women. So, with renewed vigour and a wider outlook upon life, the little band of gardeners return with all their various equipment to the peace of the garden, where the hum of bees and the call of birds have gone on uninterruptedly during their absence.

Fragrant scent of sweetbriar, elderflower, and thorn are wafted into the rooms, for the steamy, hot, sunshiny days, days of "good growing weather," have come at last. Quick growth has followed, so that yellow alyssum, grown brighter, vies with tall doronicum in depth of colour and geum " Mrs. Bradshaw " has hastened into bloom, although it seems but yesterday that daffodils turned pale before they said good-bye. Alpine strawberries in the chinks between paving-stones are in full flower and other old friends are coming quickly back to greet us. A few days' absence makes such happenings noticeable and adds to the pleasure of returning home. The garden world is once more in full progress and with all stir and movement, too, come new recruits who have heard, at Chelsea, what a happy, busy life it is and wish to do their share in making the earth yield her plenty.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ANCIENT SUSSEX GAME OF STOOLBALL

As the middle of the year approaches and soon the longest day and shortest night will be here, there comes a hope that the wind will change. Those who till the land are like seamen and aviators, dependent upon kind or boisterous weather moods, and so in all these professions weather-lore has to be studied. The sunrise, mist hanging over hills, the direction from which the wind blows, cloud-shapes, the colour of sunsets, all have a prophetic tale of guidance for the man or woman who anxiously awaits opportunity for action. Then, too, for gardeners, a proper condition of ground, neither too dry nor too hard, not so wet that each footmark treads in and injures fine tilth and the good prospects of seeds forcing their way through the earth, has to be remarked and quickly decided upon. Good or indifferent crops may result from such apparently trivial matters.

For this reason, amongst many others, it is helpful if those who wish to become gardeners have lived in the country as children. With a wide expanse of sky, not hemmed in by houses or interfered with by smoke and fogs, they instinctively acquire knowledge of weather and can foretell

more easily than the town-dweller what changes are likely to take place. I believe that quick observation and speedy decision of action are inherited, for I have often noticed that the children of sailors are particularly gifted, guessing accurately when wind, rain, or snow are coming, and ready to seize accordingly the right opportunity for carrying out special work.

This year, ever since March, whenever the wind blew vigorously it came from the east, bearing with it insect pests and extracting from the ground that moisture so essential to seeds and plants.

They were not all gardeners who watched day and night to see whence it came, for many thought of the gas fumes used by Germans and wondered whether they would be wafted towards enemies or friends in Flanders. As we drew nearer to that day when " the sun crosses the Line," those who believe in the old tradition of the wind then veering to another position became more anxious, more speculative than usual.

I stopped to speak to an old labourer who was bending over his hoe as he fetched out with an angry jerk of his arm unruly thistles that had, to annoy him, placed themselves, thickly grouped, in a corner of the field. He was delighted to interrupt his backaching job for a moment and tell me how, as a child, he remembered his grandmother's firm belief in the old saying. Exactly at the moment when this change of wind might be expected she would slowly walk to the top of a small mound in the garden at the back of her house, and with her hand held so as to shade her

eyes, for her sight was growing dim, would look across the wide, open plain till she could see the sails of a windmill. It was very far away and such a trouble to make out which way the sails turned, but if they were swept vigorously round from the east, she would sigh and say, " We shall have a dry spring." On the other hand, when they were turned by a westerly breeze, she was pleased, because she knew that plenty of rainy weather was, of two evils, the better one to choose, if plants were to have an early start and grow strong before summer.

One of our latest excitements has been that some of the best flowers and earliest vegetables grown in the garden here are missing, and evidently some midnight thief has been at work. No doubt later on we shall discover who has taken them, but for the time being we are nonplussed. The village constable, whose military salute, alone, inspires confidence, apart from his life-long experience of laying skilful traps to catch the unwary, has several times examined carefully all openings in the hedges that surround the garden. His advice has been attended to, and various infallible secret recipes for the detection of an intruder have been carried out, but apparently the offender is aware of our plotting and is postponing for a time any further attack. It has hitherto been on a Saturday that the best named carnations and early peas have vanished, and so it has been decided to appoint watchmen to guard the garden when that night comes round again.

My privilege was to take first duty, and at

exactly ten o'clock by the chime of the village clock, I and a friend crept stealthily from the house on our mission of vigilant watchfulness. It was one of those brilliant moonlight nights when every object far and near can be easily discerned, and at such time one wonders why some foolish convention of wearing a light, evening dress, or the custom of sitting talking in the drawing-room, deters one from enjoying an outdoor garden world each summer evening.

As I stand alone for a few seconds on the house terrace, listening intently for any scrunching that a man's step may make on the path below, trying to detect a stumble as his foot perhaps knocks against a chalk stone on the cart track, I notice several strong, gleaming lights that at intervals flash out vividly from amidst the grass. These are starlike, flashing lights of glow-worms, and bring to mind the beauty of those firefly nights in Florence, when one watched with eagerness, trying to make a lasting mind-picture of the beauty of the scene. But, as I search high hedges and bushes to detect some human form, a different light, resembling a great arm of flame, suddenly rises from low ground at the bottom of the garden. My heated imagination seems to picture near it two figures vigorously stirring up a great mound of refuse, stacks of boughs and pieces of wood thrown together to make potash for the garden, and it dawns upon me that the flames that rise would give light in addition to that of the moon, so that the row of earliest peas, which stand close by, could easily be stripped of the fattest pods. It

has been noticeable that the thief is an expert at selecting only those flowers and vegetables that have reached saleable perfection and that his hands slip nimbly over the peas, leaving all thin, undeveloped pods to increase in size during the days and nights that he is absent from the garden.

Hurriedly I run down the grass walk, firmly gripping an electric-light lantern in one hand, and a stout blackthorn in the other, knowing that my dark cloak and noiselessly gliding footgear should not betray me, but when I reach my objective, the flame has diminished and only rises again with an occasional, abrupt, spasmodic jerk, accompanied by a crackle.

My friend, meanwhile, has been shown by a maid where to find me, and as they both emerge from behind the Lombardy poplars I hear a whisper: "Hush! did you hear that rustle?" and a reply, "No, it was only the wind in the leaves." When we meet, it is difficult to recognise each other, for moonlight plays such strange pranks and makes people grow much taller: only by peering into one another's faces can familiar features be discovered. We hold a war consultation and decide to stand near some dark, thick bush, well away from the smouldering bonfire, where, too, the light of the moon does not fall direct upon a white chalky object like the cart track and thus betray one. For some time the silence is almost overpowering; we can hear each other breathe and no other sound interrupts the watch. Then, from beyond a nut grove and bank of earth over-

grown with bushes, comes a creaking noise, as if a wooden door were thrown back upon its hinges. At once we are on the alert, and as I know every inch of ground I steal cautiously towards the place whence the noise rises. Again, it is my fate to be disappointed, for two slender, dark figures suddenly emerge from behind bushes and hurriedly give the countersign which we, who are in the secret, have previously arranged. To-night it is "The Labyrinth," for this is where fighting is now in progress.

Our little party, having been thus reinforced, has to seek a fresh hiding-place, some better, darker background that will conceal our whereabouts until the next sound disturbs the silent Downland; and, strange to say, nothing from our own country is carried to us by the wind, for now, distant but continuous and clearly audible, comes the boom of siege-guns away in Flanders. Angrily, determinedly, with apparently lavish expenditure of ammunition, does one follow the other, until it seems almost as if we, in our dreams, were standing close to those other men and women, brothers and sisters maybe, who are fighting or rendering self-sacrificing service some sixty miles away. We wonder if they have time to interrupt for a few brief seconds the work they are engaged upon and look out over the beauty of this wonderful world, drinking in the wealth of splendour that it offers, which man alone mars with his unrestrained fighting spirit. Even these great guns which carry all before them for many miles and whose activity can reduce cathedrals and towns to a mere heap of

ashes seem mean and paltry in the midst of calm beauty like the night.

But listen! Once again there is a slowly repeated sound that comes at regular intervals from the far side of the brook, only a few yards away. Our minds are so filled with war news and artillery fire that it is difficult to descend to so ordinary an object as a cow and its munching, which is most clearly what the noise represents. "Do they still munch, even at night out in a field?" whispers a student, and my friend, who is a woman-farmer, assures us that they do.

These night watches are surprising because a place that is familiar in daylight seems totally transformed when the sun is not there to show it as it is known best to us. During moments of intent listening, whilst heavy clouds of mist that have been folded over the hills are rolled backward at the commencement of early dawn, we learn how rabbits leisurely sit nibbling in the middle of the grass walk, how a partridge and her brood come hurriedly from thick undergrowth, hoping to get food and have time to conceal themselves before the gardeners begin work, how other birds burst into happy song and thrushes lightly hop on to the gay herbaceous borders. In short, it seems as if all were crying out, "The land is ours, let us enjoy ourselves; those lazy human beings are not yet astir, to interrupt us."

But our watchfulness was not rewarded by detecting the thief, and although we wandered at intervals round vegetable plots and orchards, we only came across detachments of other watchers,

who, after whispering the magic word " Labyrinth," passed on to the dark shadows of the Irish yews.

Next day, the only discovery that came to reward us for our night vigil was that a beautiful named carnation, one specially valued and therefore easily recognised, was found far from the plot of ground where it had been placed after its greenhouse days, and lying cast upon the ground near the home of the blue gentians. This was proof to us that some one had meant to carry off other flowers but, hearing perhaps whispers and footsteps, had been deterred from doing so, and in hurried flight had left this one flower behind.

The whole world, even that of our peaceful garden, seems just now filled with spycraft and suspicion, which makes it all the more restful to go out on a summer's morning into the happiness and enjoyment of sunlight to see what the flowers can tell. It is the day of the College stoolball match, and as our captain is most desirous that her team should play well in a contest with a " crack " opposing eleven, she decides that the morning's work shall, for once, not be overstrenuous. I meet her therefore leading a band of twenty-four students through mazes of pergolas and narrow walks, where pink cluster roses vie with white ones as to which look most beautiful against a deep blue sky. Not only are names of different varieties noted, though these are written plentifully in their little pocket-books, but the young women are also given an object-lesson as regards beauty of colour and graceful growth, and their attention is drawn to what con-

stitutes real art in a garden, where the natural, unrestrained freedom of plants should always be a first consideration. If they require, for the sake of orderliness and restraint, to be staked or tied, it has to be so carefully and skilfully done that the observer is unconscious of it. One of the greatest difficulties in teaching about garden upkeep and routine work is to impress upon young gardeners the fact that although weeds have to be banished, dying leaves swept away, and over-arching honeysuckle or roses have to be tied in cases where they block an entrance, yet plants are like children and only flourish and remain happy if a considerable degree of liberty is encouraged. There should be no tightly strained ties of raffia or tarred twine, no hard, forced lines by which creepers are controlled, all should be Nature at her best, brought easily and gently to the immediate surroundings of a house. This to my mind is the pleasure of a garden.

Talking in this strain, teaching her young people how to think for themselves, which is a lesson seriously neglected in modern days, the captain guides them along narrow grass-grown paths and their devious course until, after forming loops and half-circles, slowly ascending, they reach the summit of a high mound, to which we, who know similar features in Italian gardens, give the name of " Paradiso." It is an artificial feature, formed by accumulated deposits of hard chalk excavated from where the lawn-tennis ground had to be levelled and carted away by lime-pit men. Gradually its height was still more added to by having

old pots and pans, chipped bricks and broken drain-pipes, all the accumulations that somehow find their way into gardens, heaped upon the top of it. Then, when it began to settle, and rain and weather even more than human hands shaped it into a miniature mountain, broken glass and crockery, treasured remains of visits to foreign countries that a youthful member of my kitchen often gave a death-blow to, were added to the funeral pile. Buried beneath chalk they lie, helping to make a home for rosemary and pink Bourbon roses, which, together with the dark green of Irish yews, have converted this raised ground into an ornamental mound garden. As, in single file, looking like some band of pilgrims or blue-robed saints of Fra Angelico, they continue their walk, I hear their leader draw attention to a deeply excavated, sunk garden which " Paradiso " looks down upon, and which, for the sake of comparison, we have named " Inferno." At present, with a carpet of forget-me-not and irises, it resembles a sea of blue, but sometimes we have contemplated turning it into a scarlet garden and having a mass of red-hot poker plants, or some flower name like it, that would be more in keeping as a stronghold to which enemies could be banished.

I should explain that when my gardeners play stoolball they wear a different uniform from the one in which they carry on their garden work. In order to distinguish them from their opponents they have skirts of Irish poplin, and the colour selected is that of the order of St. Patrick. Consequently, dressed in this most beautiful of all

shades of blue, with neat white shirts and broad-brimmed straw hats with a touch of blue ribbon on them, they add greatly to the picturesque appearance of a semi-wild part of the garden such as we have been considering.

Only one very restricted portion of ground is treated in stiff, formal style and this, known as the little " French garden," gay with scarlet geraniums and yellow calceolarias, is kept bright and very spick-and-span throughout spring and summer, so that all may learn how " bedding out " is done. Its central, heart-shaped bed is guarded, upon either side, by two others shaped like fleurs-de-lis, and a long, narrow, square-mesh treillage bower, similar to those simple ones that are shown in Androuet du Cerceau's sixteenth-century French gardens, overshadows a seat, from which other flower and fruit terraces can be seen.

I think it is Maeterlinck who draws attention to the reason why most of us prefer old-fashioned flowers such as sunflowers, *Monarda didyma*, lilies, and roses to the begonias and double geraniums that have sprung up in recent years, having won the hearts of certain suburban amateurs by their prolific powers of increase. He says that the reason these long-familiar flowers give joy and happiness is because they bring down to us some reflection of our own ancestors, for we know, in looking at a well-arranged herbaceous border, that many of the plants in it were favourites in days of powder and brocade. This may be partly why we love them, but when it is a question of perennials on borders or in beds and not annuals, I think

we value the former chiefly because in most cases their leaves are with us throughout the winter months and help to give life to long stretches of brown earth beds.

Just now, is a good moment for noting which plants do best and look well when seen near together in close companionship. For instance, a carpet of corydalis with pale yellow aquilegias springing up through it seems to lead well in colour to a large bush of *Buddleia globosa*, the golden balls of which are of a stronger tone. Near these a Phlomis has flowers and foliage of a softer shade but amalgamates well with this yellow portion of the border. We endeavour to arrange plants according to colour-scheme suggestions that are found in Mr. W. Robinson's "English Flower Garden," so that one part consists of blue flowers, merging gradually into white, which is followed perhaps by a pale yellow, leading to stronger shades and then to reds. Each of our students has a fixed portion of border handed over to her care, and a prize is allotted to the one who has the best-kept border at the end of July. In the blue portion are delphiniums, anchusa, and *Clematis integrifolia* rising from a carpet of myosotis with here and there a clump of rosemary to give soft green foliage and a relief from overmuch colour. Then, in the pink portion are Canterbury bells, *Incarvillea Delavayi*, and pæonies ; in later summer these are followed in succession by pink phloxes and gladioli in succession.

Later in the day I walk across the hills to a wide shadow group of tall trees that lie at one

end of the cricket ground to give shelter and protection to those who sit and watch the games. Both dogs go with me and their gambols and excited barking arouse the curiosity of a rosy-faced boy who is playing with his nurse in the park near by. "What are Tim and Mischief going to look at?" he shouts, for he no doubt feels that what will be of interest to his four-footed friends is likely to suit his own tastes. "Why, the young garden ladies playing stool-ball," says the nurse, and so we all five start running through the long grass to see who gets there first.

The casual observer may think the game a poor one compared with cricket, although the rules in both are very similar, but it must be remembered that stoolball is essentially a game for girls, and although we know from the following verse, with its rather charming chorus, that young men sometimes joined in playing it with their sweethearts, it requires far less strength than a boys' game.

"Down in a vale on a summer's day,
All the lads and lasses met to be merry;
A match for kisses at stoolball to play,
And for cakes, and ale, and cider, and perry.

Chorus

"Come all, great, small, short, tall, away to stoolball!"

These lines occur in a play called "Don Quixote," written by D'Urfey and acted at Dorset Gardens in 1694, which gives us a definite, early date when the game was well known in England. Another

allusion to it occurs in 1740 in " Poor Robin's Almanack " :

> " Now milkmaid's pails are deckt with flowers,
> And men begin to drink in bowers
> Sweet Sillabubs, and lip-loved tansey,
> Whilst hob-nail Dick and simp'ring Frances
> Trip it away in country dances ;
> At stoolball and at barley-break,
> Wherewith they harmless pastime make."

Games of ball are all much alike if we go by descriptions given of them in old books, and it is difficult to make out exactly the difference between " stowball," " stoolball," and " bittle-battle," but it seems probable that the first is a kind of golf and that the two last denote what was no doubt the ancestor of cricket, handed down in a somewhat altered form to the Sussex women of to-day.

There are undoubted references to games like these, and closely allied to hockey, in the " Tain bo Cnailgne," an Irish epic which was written down in the seventh century and often transcribed until the eleventh century ; but the most definite details about stoolball are found in Dr. Johnson's Dictionary. He says : " It is a play where balls are driven from stool to stool."

A tradition exists that it was originally played by milkmaids using their milking-stools as bats, but the name of " bittle-battle," which is also given to the game, leads one to think that these young women used their " bittles " or wooden milking-bowls as bats, and that the milking stool was the wicket. This might account for the

peculiar appearance of the " targets " that are now used as wickets, for they consist of either square or round boards, about one foot in diameter, and fastened to an upright post fixed in the ground.

But let us watch more closely how the gardeners play. During war-time, whilst work is strenuous, they have not many opportunities for practice, and only an occasional hour can be snatched in the late evening, when plants have been watered, to try their hand at batting, fielding, and bowling. The rules resemble those of cricket, for the " target " must be guarded from the bowler, but one difficult part of the game for novices to remember is that they have to tap the wicket at their own end before they run across and touch it at the opposite end. The ball is a tennis ball, rather harder than what is used for lawn tennis, but about the same size, and, owing to a somewhat peculiar shape of bat and to the fact that the lowest part of the " target " is four feet from the ground, it is very difficult to make it travel far. The bat is made of a piece of wood and in shape and size is rather like an ordinary fives bat, so that only a good many years' practice can give that skill which enables people to make a large number of runs and thus score higher than the opposing eleven.

To-day, the best team in Sussex having been challenged, the gardeners will have a hard fight and although they obtained the first innings and have made a good score, the opposing side, who are now batting, are fast gaining on them. A pleasant interval comes when tea is ready, doubly

enjoyable because defeat is not yet a certainty for our side. Round the players gather many past-masters of the game, onlookers who never weary of criticising and praising, because they played themselves when they were children and can speak with authority. These are the wives of village leaders and of officials such as the postman, mason, and carpenter, and as some have babies who cannot be left at home, a sprinkling of perambulators surrounds the tea-table. So from earliest days the Sussex child grows accustomed to stoolball, and sometimes the best team has in its eleven little girls of ten or twelve years old, who are particularly nimble and quick at picking up a ball and flinging it towards the " target."

These old country games are to be encouraged, for apart from the excitement of competition between distant villages, the fun of playing and the interest in looking on, there is so much to be learnt from them. Playing for a captain teaches discipline and resourcefulness, and those who play games much should be able to learn how to conceal their feelings. Boys teach each other these simple things in schooldays ; they learn then how to take a beating well, and not to show too much pleasure over winning, but girls have not the same opportunities of becoming philosophers.

As children, they have far less chance of understanding that *esprit de corps* which public-school life teaches to boys. Having to face discipline, punctuality, ability to shoulder responsibility, the knowing how to " keep smiling " when things are not looking especially hopeful, above all a capa-

bility of holding their own counsel, all these are lessons usually omitted from the youthful training of both village lasses and the daughters of middle-class people. Those who understand them far better are the average young women of the upper classes, because, even if they themselves have not been under good schoolroom discipline, they have heard from their brothers what a public school or a regiment demands from a young man, and so soon develop similar qualities. It is, indeed, fortunate when such small failings and weaknesses are overcome in childhood, because they appear as insurmountable difficulties when they have to be faced perhaps between twenty and thirty years of age, at a time when all attention should be centred upon technical knowledge for a future profession, when character-building and the unselfishness of community life should long ago have been mastered.

" It is easy enough to sit here and criticise, but very different and difficult to be standing out in the sun, fielding balls well, if you haven't done it all your life," says the mason's good-looking wife, always a loyal partisan of the gardeners. This remark seems applicable to most criticisms of the work of modern women, and yet those who know by experience what splendid results they can attain, what love they possess for work, only venture to point out those qualities that have not yet reached perfection.

So much lies before them in the near future, such great things are expected of them at the moment, that their well-wishers become anxiously

desirous of seeing in them that easy submission to discipline which men have attained because they have behind them generations of transmitted tradition concerning work.

There is no doubt that stoolball and other games help towards this perfecting of work-power, and so what seems but idle playtime on this summer afternoon is in reality an important part of women-gardeners' training.

CHAPTER XIV

GARDEN HARVEST

Our garden harvest is beginning. It embraces about twelve weeks, during which flowers, fruit, and vegetables attain perfection and are more plentiful than at any other time of year. Active preparation during long autumn and winter months leads up to this anxiously-awaited time ; spring days of continuous seed-sowing, early summer with its hoeing and weeding, all help towards what is reaped. When leaves turn scarlet or drop, brown and shrivelled, to the ground, then we know that nothing remains of past garden glory, except those emblems which we are able to dry or preserve and bring to the house for use or ornament. One of the most delicious reminders of summer days is *pot-pourri*.

The friends who come to stay with me are enticed into this work of picking roses, and when they are given Sussex trugs and told to fill them only with the freshest flowers, those that show no sign of decay about their petals, they look askance upon me as a cold-blooded murderer.

Experience teaches that where there are hedges of old China roses, where pink Bourbons flourish, it is helpful to them if all fully-opened flowers are

gently removed before they wither. It gives a chance to young buds, which have more room then to expand and greater strength when not impeded by their elders. Whilst the sun shines and draws all dew from their petals, a continuous procession of those who have collected roses is seen to approach the house. They are brought to me, for my work is to sprinkle them carefully in thin layers so that they may dry well in sunny windows.

The floor of the lecture-room is, for the time being, transformed into a rose-petal carpet and as, in summer, no lectures take place there, because out-of-door demonstrations are so much the most helpful, there is room for innumerable cardboard boxes and sheets of paper upon which are thinly strewn rose-petals of every shade. Very lovely they look in all the different stages of their treatment, and when the sun has dried them sufficiently and left them pliable, neither scorched nor shrivelled to hardness, they are thrown by handfuls into brown earthenware bread-pans, kept for the purpose. Some years we have enough to fill five or six of these, if the harvest has been a plentiful one. Each day fresh layers are added, until the whole room is perfumed with their delicious scent. One by one our great " Ali Baba jars," as we are wont to call them, are filled, and then bay salt is mixed very thoroughly with the dried petals, a thick piece of brown paper being put over the top of each jar and held in place by the lid, which prevents air from penetrating.

We preserve, as a carefully-guarded secret, the

exact recipe by which all the different powders and liquid essences are mixed with the roses, but there is one rather sombre-looking brown powder, soft and velvety to touch, which always brings specially to mind old historic associations. It consists of cloves which have been pounded by the chemist into such fine powder that except for the invigorating scent they are hardly recognisable. In the days of the Stuarts, cloves were much used to make those delightful sweet-smelling "pomanders" that we read of as counteracting the unpleasant odours of the plague. People carried a perforated silver ball, and within was an orange studded all over with cloves. By using a Seville orange, and piercing it with innumerable holes, into each of which is put a clove, and then drying it at the fire until the whole assumes a brown appearance, any one can try the experiment of refilling their old pomander case, if they are fortunate enough to possess one.

So much valued were cloves about three hundred years ago that two companies, an English and a Dutch East India Company, sought to secure a monopoly of the Spice Islands and were particularly envious of those where the clove grew. There is something so gentle, almost soothing, about the powder, as it slips through one's fingers, and yet there are few objects over which as regards the rights of sale more hostile warfare has been waged.

It is when the rose garden is at its fullest that lavender too is ready for picking. This happens usually during one of the last days of July; and

what a busy, happy morning it is, when with a large knife and long swinging movement, resembling in miniature the rhythmic sweep of the reaper with his scythe, the tall purple spikes are laid in thick bunches, ready to be used for the linen-chest! During many weeks that follow a welcoming warm scent meets one at the front door and the first exclamation of each visitor is "How delicious the house smells!"

About the same time, when all our grand private customers have flown to Scotland and require no supplies, the garden is gay with large plots of market-beds that are ready to give cut flowers for Bank Holiday trippers in seaside towns. They have to be catered for quite differently from the high-class visitor, who cares only for such perfection as is to be found in the carnation, that greatly-loved favourite of the soldier Condé. The London business man is much less difficult to please when he stays away for August holidays, so that Achillea, "the Pearl," cornflowers of dazzling blue, sweet-peas and scabious are his choice, and these we send him in plenty.

This year we hesitated about growing cornflowers, knowing that they were the Kaiser's favourite, and punishment overtook us for allowing them a place in the garden, because they had a very bad attack of "rust," to which they had never been subject before, and superstition attributes this to their being allies of our enemy.

Picking and packing is an arduous occupation throughout these summer days, for it has to be done in the cool, so that sometimes there are busy

hands doing work after eight at night, as well as at five in the morning. Those are the pleasantest hours of a gardener's life, and although many who have only seen what sunrise looks like when they have had the prospect of a cub-hunt before them might hesitate as to this enjoyment, a gardener, if she be true to her profession, treasures early and late hours above all others.

Those are times, when, alone with Nature, it is possible to step from the track of habitual routine and take a wider, more far-reaching view of the world in which we really live. With W. Watson she is able to say :

> " To things, not phantoms, let us cleave,
> The things that are more excellent."

Then, it must be remembered, too, that in the heat of midday, at a moment when most people first leave the house to go for a drive in their car, a gardener rests. Her days, in short, are turned into the habitual, customary ones of a Southern people, and between eleven and two a light luncheon and peaceful slumber in a darkened room revive her so much that nothing short of waning evening light stops her ardour for work. On exceptionally hot days there is the swimming pool in the meadows below, where a refreshing interval can be spent ; thus time flies quickly by and perhaps what makes the days seem more peaceful than those of other people is a freedom from household cares. During a student's training, the housekeeper at the hostel and the other landladies

all undertake entire responsibility for ordering, cooking, and planning ; consequently this burden of the average woman is not borne by a gardener.

But it is to the rose garden that I would lead you, for its beauty is short-lived. It consists of an oblong level lawn, broken by many long, narrow beds, which are filled with roses of every description. Some, supported by tall tripods of wood, wave long branches above them, others droop weeping over umbrella-shaped structures made of wire and hoops of wood, and in between these climbers are dwarf roses. In the centre of the garden is a circular structure made of square-mesh treillage, and in it are tall arched entrances and small round windows through which little peeps of distant Downland and Weald are seen as if framed by rose-leaves. A very tall pole stands in the midst of this, and hanging from it are chains fixed at the other end to the treillage circle, making it a sort of old-fashioned pale-blue Maypole, encircled by the outstretched branches of roses.

Upon the sunny side, with its entrance facing north, is a shadow-house of seventeenth-century style, but with that touch of Eastern taste that was then being slowly introduced into English decoration. This is indicated by its dome-shaped roof and pointed corner ornaments, somewhat pyramidal in shape.

For many years I was puzzled how to make pergolas secure in a wind-swept garden. After a stormy night it was grievous to see the poor garden, for autumn gales worked havoc with the tall uprights that supported the pergolas. At

length a solution of this difficulty was found, and now all these square, creosoted uprights are slipped into a shoe of iron and this square metal structure, when embedded in cement, is firm enough to prevent any movement of the wooden structure. In between some of the climbing roses in the largest beds are bushes of rosemary, its bright-green foliage giving that repose that is so welcome when flower colour is strong. It was planted also to prove, if it flourished, the truth of the old saying that woman's work prospers where it grows well, and being, too, the emblem of "remembrance," guards the last resting-place of many faithful favourites. The rose garden is where they sleep, those four black pugs and the one beautiful white swan, but their work of giving pleasure to others is not yet ended, for on each small raised grave is a shell-shaped bowl of Compton pottery, in which birds splash and plume their feathers.

Close to the rose garden is a narrow red-tiled path overshadowed by ornamental vines, leading to a tall bird fountain, on the pedestal of which is written :

"Prega meglio chi meglio ama ogni creatura."

No dinner-bell or prospect of a rabbit-hunt will rouse the sleepers now, though fairies say that on midsummer's night Black Prince, that king amongst good-natured pugs, scampers again across the smooth lawns to answer his master's call, and perhaps the swan too sings his death-song in the meadows ?

Upon three sides of the rose garden are raised

banks with pergolas of roses. Here is Waltham rambler, whose flower-clusters, resembling apple blossom, begin to grow white as their days of beauty draw to a close. Aimée Vibert is near by, and Homer's rather precise-looking pink buds wave against the spotless deep-blue sky, that we who live near the coast are so lucky in often having. But there are all kinds of roses, and in order to enjoy them from varying points of view the pergolas are so arranged that on the southern side of the garden they are lower than the eye of the spectator, who here looks down upon roofs of treillage to where pink flower-clusters strain forward to gain the sunshine, whilst, turning to the other side, he sees the flowers high above his head. In this way it is possible to carry colour in all directions, and without being satisfied only with carpets such as dwarf pink Bourbons and La France give, to mount yet higher to some twelve feet from the ground, where Hiawatha, Lady Gay, and Dorothy Perkins sway in festoons of resplendent reds and pinks.

We have gained an impression of the rose harvest, now let us see what other things can help towards making winter days more pleasant. Many bunches of golden-leaved thyme have to be picked and carefully dried, so that sweet-smelling bags filled with it can be laid beneath pillows and in the folds of linen sheets. Golden gourds, too, are brought indoors and they and other miniature striped green-and-white ones are arranged in blue china bowls or upon trays, to stand reflected on the shining boards of highly polished oak tables.

ROSES.

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We usually obtain seed of these from Germany, but this year we have been obliged to rely entirely upon that obtained from last year's home-grown crop. Bright red Physalis, too, is useful in tall vases, standing out well against a white background, and then there are the soft, silky outer scales of Honesty to be scattered in the wind before the snowy-white inner ones can be used for decoration.

The student in charge of fruit-picking has a busy time, for pears and plums are a plentiful crop, and at no time does the Sussex word " to terrify " (pronounced tarrify) assume so true a meaning as when wasps come " teasing " round.

But this year the harvest brings to us other signs of prosperity and plenty. There is slowly, but surely, a decided movement of progress towards larger development in questions connected with the land. Recently, in this neighbourhood, a motor lorry has been purchased upon a co-operative basis by several farmers, which will collect milk and carry it direct to a retail purchaser. As this becomes better known, similar arrangements will no doubt be made for the disposal of eggs and poultry, and in this way a network of co-ordinated workers will be established throughout the country.

Dreams of future possibilities are encouraged, when, in the twilight hour of a summer's evening, a group of figures surround a central one in the carnation parlour. She plays and softly sings to them, and they who usually are strung up to severe attention, fearful lest some slight negligence

should be noticed or reprimanded, now at length relax and offer themselves to pure enjoyment.

In different positions they sit or kneel, some on the floor, others on an oak chest, but always with their faces turned towards the singer. Some prefer one song, some another, while all are content to leave to her the choice so long as they may sit like children, quietly listening. Then the windows are flung wide open, for gardeners know that the flowers, too, will want to hear

> "Beautiful garden of roses,
> Kissed by the morning dew,"

and that next day hollyhocks will have grown taller and bear more buds, and other flowers be brighter in colour for the waves of song that the breeze has carried to them. Those who doubt this should try the experiment for themselves, only they must remember that the waves of sound must be sympathetic ones and bear real love to the flowers.

And whilst the song continues, those who look into the future see what power could come from all established educational centres if groups of growers and producers were permanently attached to them. A long-cherished hope, which concerns our own work here, seems about to be realised.

It is, that the Mother College of Glynde should have living in close proximity to her and settled upon land of their own groups of educated men and women, well trained in market-gardening, poultry-keeping, and similar industries, who, by

intelligent supervision and work, could make our land yield more. Many labourers and ex-soldiers returned from the war would be employed by them, which would bring about that much-needed want, the recolonisation of England. These growers and producers would thus benefit by keeping in close touch with experts who lecture at the College, would hear about the latest methods of cultivation, witness the most recent experiments, and above all assist the Mother College in fostering and spreading a spirit of active co-operation. If this could be carried out near each Agricultural and Horticultural College in England, great results would ensue. These are amongst the many dreams that music encourages.

At other times, when dusk comes, a little group with pale-blue coats stand waiting at the top of the garden steps, for the Captain holds a levée. One by one they are called, enter the cabin, and salute. Then each one tells of her misfortunes or relates any news of good luck that the day has brought her, and although I have never been near enough to hear exactly what takes place, I have drawn my own conclusions. I know that each one would be disappointed if she were not allowed to say "Good night," if she had not this opportunity of freeing her mind from any hidden trouble; I know, too, by the look on each face as it is turned homewards, that praise when it does come is given generously.

These slender figures vanish into the darkness, and if one could read their inmost thoughts, perhaps Mr. Rudyard Kipling's words convey best

the good resolutions and ambitions that they treasure for the future :

"' And only the Master shall praise us, and only the Master shall blame ;
And no one shall work for money, and no one shall work for fame,
But each for the joy of the working, and each, in his separate star,
Shall draw the Thing as he sees It for the God of Things as They Are."

" L'Envoi " in the *Seven Seas*.

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